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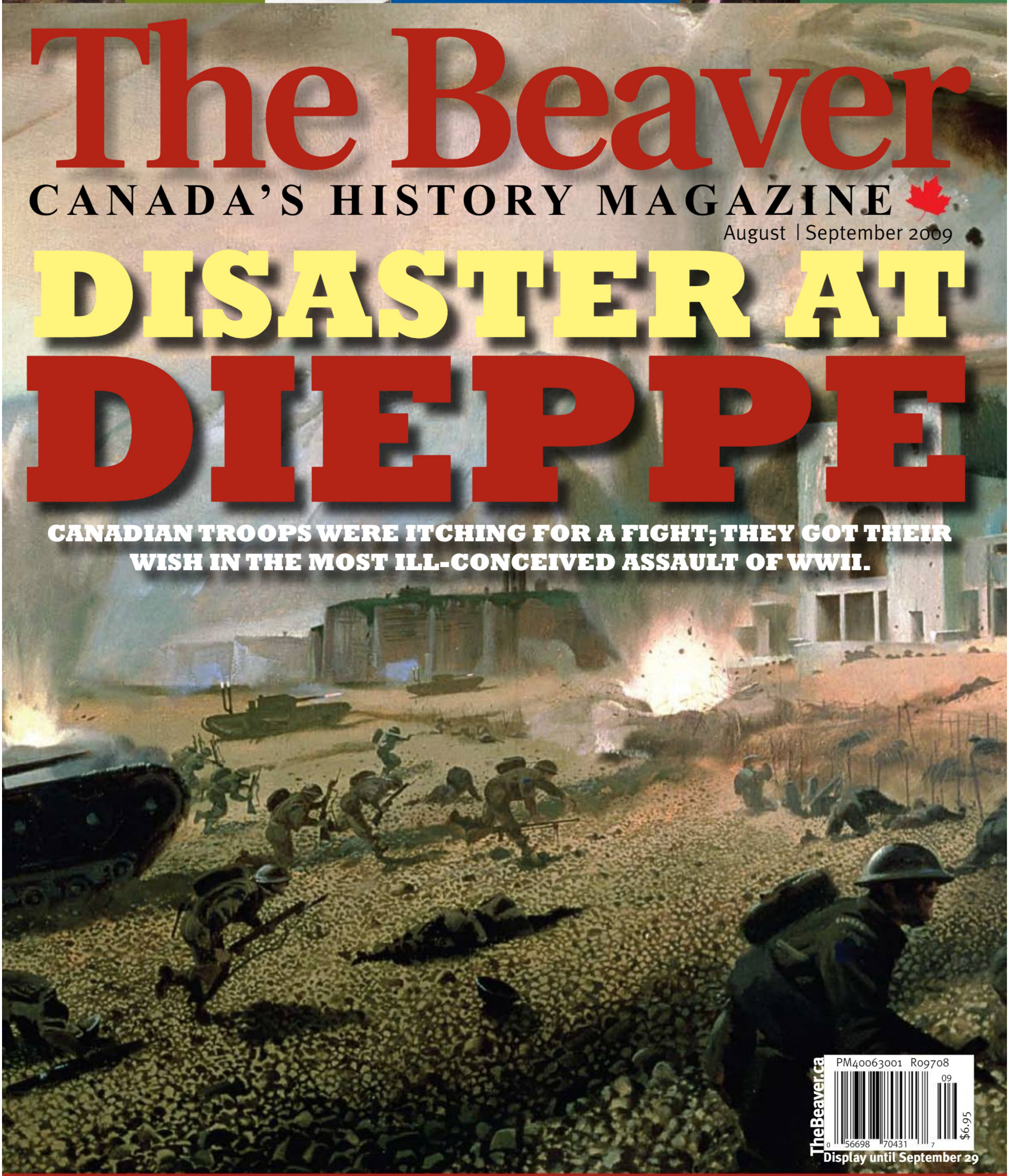
FIELDS OF FREEDOM



The Beaver

CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

August | September 2009

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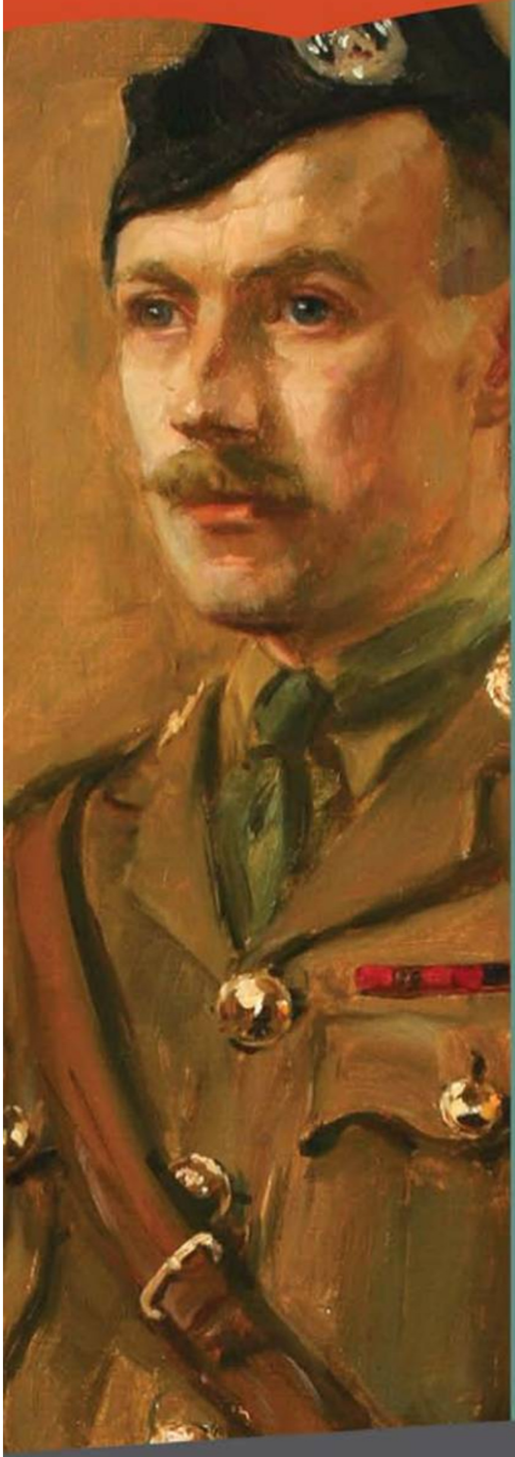

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The Beaver
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COVER: BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

Fateful encounters

I recently rented a DVD full of historical derring-do — a film starring Cate Blanchett as Queen Elizabeth I.

There's a moment from the movie that has stayed with me.

It's near the end, when the Spanish Armada is within striking distance of England. With an invasion all but certain, an armoured Blanchett rides a white steed along the English coast, urging her soldiers to not lose heart. The skies darken ominously. A violent storm, seemingly out of nowhere, sends the Spanish warships crashing into each other — perfect sitting ducks for Sir Francis Drake and his English fire ships.

Soon, the horizon is glowing with the flames of Spanish defeat. History has turned on a bit of wind and an ocean-sized allotment of bad luck.

In this issue, we revisit two battles in Canadian history that could have gone either way, depending on luck's favour. Both involved amphibious assaults on seemingly impregnable targets. One took place in New France, the other in occupied France. In both cases, fate seemed to be a deciding factor.

MARIANNE HELM

The first battle took place in September 1759. After months of futility and frustration, British General James Wolfe ordered his redcoats to make a bold, and possibly foolhardy, attack on Quebec City just upriver from the Old Town. As the troops scrambled up the sheer cliff face at Anse au Foulon, they were overheard by French sentries.

At that instant, the fate of New France hung in the balance. There are so many what ifs: What if the sentries had automatically sounded the alarm? What if Wolfe's last-ditch attack had failed? As history tells us, luck was with the British — they were fortunate to have among them a Scottish officer who spoke French. And so, when the sentry challenged the British to identify themselves, the Scottish officer, speaking in French, urged the sentry to keep quiet: "You'll give us away to the English!" he cried. The sentry obeyed, and, within minutes, the British had overwhelmed the guards and were marching toward their destiny at the Plains of Abraham. (*Read D. Peter Macleod's story "Women of War" to learn more about the role women played during the siege.*)

One hundred and eighty-three years later, Canadian troops found themselves hunkered in landing crafts heading for Nazi-occupied France. It was August 1942, and the Canadians, bored with endless training in England, were chafing for a chance to get into the fight.

The Dieppe raid, otherwise known as Operation Jubilee, was a do-over. The first planned assault, Operation Rutter, was cancelled due to bad weather. Historian J.L. Granatstein, in his article "Dieppe: A colossal blunder," says that the doomed raid was botched from start to finish. He argues that the Allied commanders who sent the Canadian, British and American troops to their deaths were counting heavily on "good luck" to make up for poor planning.

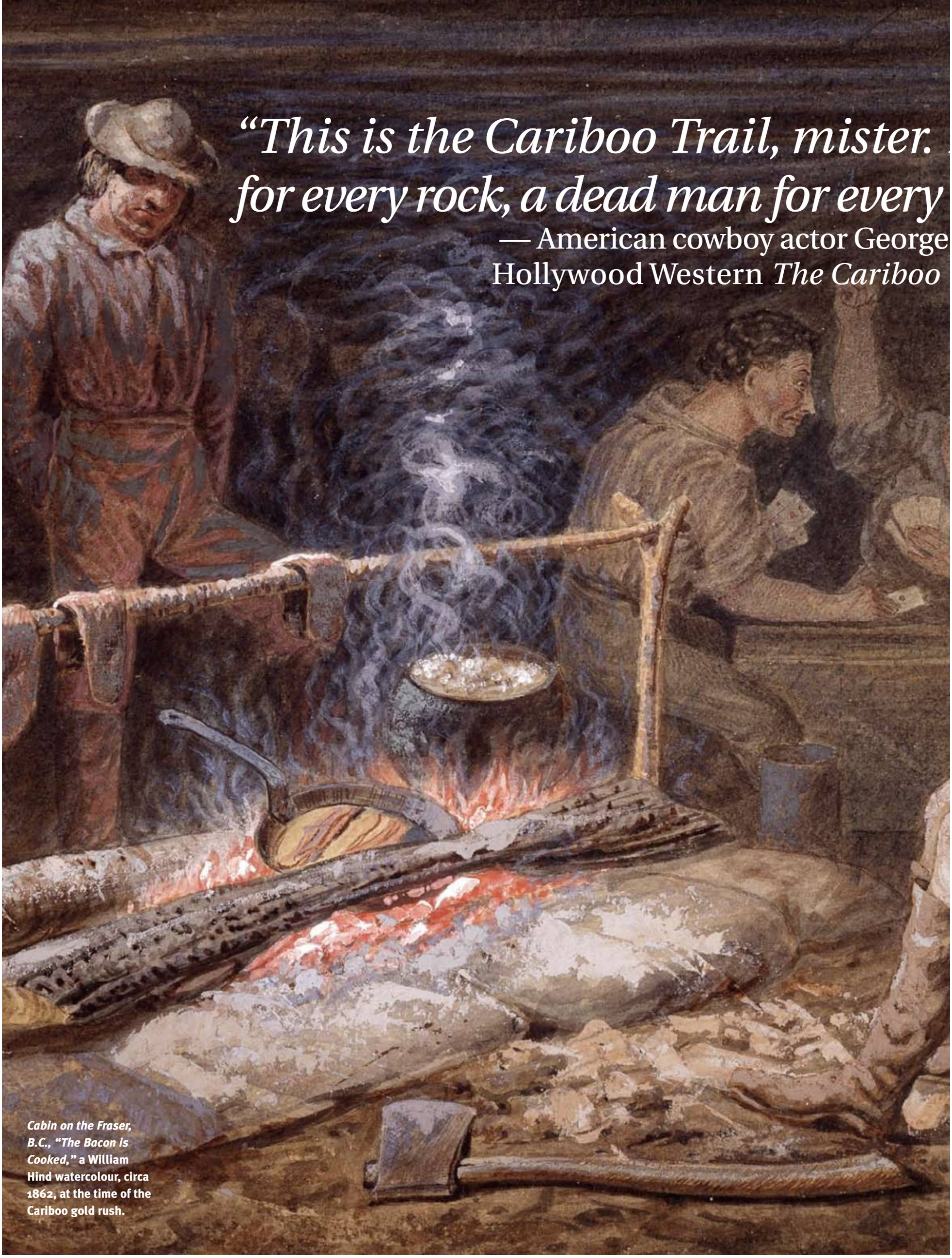
"Luck was the key," Granatstein writes. "Unfortunately, there was none in Operation Jubilee."

It was the famed Scottish poet Robert Burns who wrote "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Gang aft a-gley." As history has shown time after time, nowhere is this more true than on the battlefield.

Mark Reid

Mark Reid, Editor
editors@historysociety.ca

> *“This is the Cariboo Trail, mister.*
> *for every rock, a dead man for every*
> — American cowboy actor George
> Hollywood Western *The Cariboo*



Cabin on the Fraser, B.C., “The Bacon is Cooked,” **a William Hind watercolour, circa 1862, at the time of the Cariboo gold rush.**

A broken heart
tree."
Hayes in the 1950
Trail.

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The Beaver

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CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE
SHIPWRECKS!
Atlantic sealing disaster • Great Lakes nightmare • Massacre mystery on the West Coast
Ship

Wreck victims named

It was of special interest to me to read Douglas Hunter's piece about the *Waubuno* ["The Sorcerer's Ship"] in the June/July 2009 issue of *The Beaver.*

In the mid-90s, as a staff writer with *Huronia Sunday*, a weekly in Simcoe County, Ontario, I came upon the tragic *Waubuno* story in the Simcoe County archives. During my research I came upon the names of several of those lost in the disaster. I think they may be of interest to your readers. The following are the names I found:

Passengers: B. Noel Fisher, editor and proprietor of the Parry Sound *North Star*; newlyweds Dr. W. H. and Mrs. Doupe of Mitchell, [Ontario]; Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester; Mr. Griffin of Gananoque, Quebec; and three others thought to be William Robinson of Oro Township, Ontario, and his two sons. Other possible passengers were a Mrs. McDougal and her family, and printer David Collette.

Crew: Captain Burkett; mate S. Ford; chief engineer McQuade; J. Rowland, Jr., purser; J. McMurchy and James Harris, wheelsmen; Miss Mary Hyatt, lady's maid; George Bass, steward; B. Wyly, porter; J. Hall, cook; J. Wingrove, and a Mr. Jamieson. George Playter, the scheduled wheelsman, cancelled at the last minute, and one other deckhand was missing.

Because no bodies were ever found, no compensation was forthcoming from the owner. As a memorial of sorts, the *Waubuno*'s large anchor stands in Parry Sound's town square with an historical plaque nearby at the town dock. Her rudder is displayed at the Huronia Museum in Midland, [Ontario].

Barbara Pritchard Fear
Amherstview, Ontario

For the record

Following publication of my story "Steamer into Oblivion," in the June/July issue of *The Beaver* I have subsequently learned that it was Bella Coola [Nuxalk] natives that were first to discover wreckage from the *Geo. S. Wright* near Cape Caution and not the Bella Bella [Heiltsuk] natives. This was confirmed by the first report of the wreck in the *British Colonist*'s rival Victoria paper, *The Daily Standard*, on February 27, 1873: "The Indians who bring the news, are of the Bella Coolla [sic] tribe... ."

This claim was also substantiated in a report written by Capt. A.B. Davis, commanding officer, U.S. Revenue Steamer *Lincoln,* following his cruise in search of survivors of the steamer *Geo. S. Wright* in August 1873.

"At Bella Koola [sic], up the Bentinck Arm, the Indians encamped there were reported to be the first to visit Cape Caution after the wreck of the steamer... . They seemed very peaceable and bore that reputation among the agents of the Hudson's Bay Company who live among them. I came to the conclusion that the rumours and reports of foul play being done to any of the passengers and crew of the *Wright* were instigated by a few unreliable and unprincipled white men, whose reputation in British Columbia is very bad."

In the late 1990s, I happened to accompany my partner, Paula Wild, in carrying out research in the Bella Coola Valley. [Members of the Nuxalk nation] not only "seemed very peaceable" and friendly, but...were more than willing to share stories of their history and culture.

Rick James
Courtenay, British Columbia

Oil history untapped

As one of the original pioneers of the Great Canadian Oil Sands plant that produced the first successful synthetic crude oil in 1967 from the Athabasca oil sands, I concur with Mr. Moore's contention ["Oil History's Black Hole," June/July 2009]. There are no current and complete books on one of Canada's most important and remarkable scientific and resource achievements — the oil sands of Alberta.

[However], Mary Clark Sheppard, the daughter of renowned scientist Dr. Karl A. Clark, has compiled the two best historical oil sands history books. She researched this legendary chemist's work in *Oil Sands Scientist* and *Athabasca Oil Sands*, published by the University of Alberta Press. One more book is in the works by a Calgary historical researcher who is aiming to clear the smokescreen and tell the real story of the oil sands. It is due to be published in 2010. Stay tuned.

Bert MacKay,
Chairman, Oilsands Pioneers'
Association,
Edmonton

More to the story

As a member of the board of the Petroleum History Society, I appreciated Christopher Moore's column, "Oil History's Black Hole." However, I think a number of references from the Canadian Centre for Energy and other sources might address some of the points. [*Editor's note: To see the listing of Web links and books, go to TheBeaver.ca.*]

Despite the amount of material available, I agree that Canadians [not just Albertans] have a lamentable lack of interest in industrial history — most history for that matter. *The Beaver* is a small ray of light in our dark corners.

Robert Bott
Calgary

Bartlett's N.B. connection

I was particularly interested in reading Nelle Oosterom's short note in *The Beaver* [Currents: "Polar letdown," June/July 2009] about Robert Abram Bartlett. Bartlett was certainly a native Newfoundlander, but I think it worth noting that he had strong New Brunswick links as well.

His grandmother was Margaret Snowball [Wilcox] from Chatham, New Brunswick. Margaret Snowball's brother, J.B. Snowball, was [a]... leading businessmen, a senator, and for a while, lieutenant governor of the province. I know this because my great-grandmother was Mary Snowball [Black], Bartlett's great-aunt.

Bartlett spent several days at the home of my great-grandmother in the tiny New Brunswick village of Middle Sackville in February 1910, not long after his famous voyage. As you can imagine, this caused quite a flurry in the local press, which trumpeted "Capt. Bartlett of Arctic Exploration Fame Visiting Mrs. Black." My father (born 1900), uncles, and aunts remembered the 'visitation' and the excitement, but not much of the detail.

Larry Black, Professor Emeritus
Barrie, Ontario

Hands-on history

Being the first time I have read this magazine, I am in full agreement with the "Living History" [Editor's note] by Mark Reid [April/May 2009]. All of our family has been involved in black powder shooting since the 1970s... Casting our own lead balls, using homemade weapons such as knives and hatchets, cooking over open fires, and living the lives of these people, has made my family much more familiar with the history of this [eighteenth century] time period. They have come to appreciate the camaraderie and fun involved and at the same time realize that this too was a part of our history and heritage, not just the dry stuff taught in school about the European influence.

The cancellation of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham on the original battle site perhaps was not "politically correct?"

This is too bad. This type of historical re-enactment definitely makes our history much more interesting and puts it within the grasp of most people to understand.

Ron LaRoy
Revelstoke, British Columbia

Facts about Viola

I would like to clear up, or add to, several points in the "Ticket to Freedom" story [April/May 2009].

On page 26, regarding the racial [ethnic] background of my mother: my mother's mother, born in New Haven, Connecticut, was white. My mother's father, born in Richmond, Virginia, was of a mixed racial background. His white father was owner of a plantation and his mother was the black housekeeper. My family wanted me to set it straight. Although my mother was not a visible minority, she never considered herself white.

I would like to mention that my sister Helen Davis is also in the picture of the beauty school's graduating class, back row, far right, on page 27.

The picture on page 29 was taken at the Boston High Hat Club in 1955. Billie Holiday was singing — wish I had got her autograph!

Thank you for selecting myself, and my late sister, Viola Desmond, to be a part of your informative magazine. I think you made me famous, as I have received many calls from friends and relatives!

Wanda Robson
North Sydney, Nova Scotia

***The Beaver* welcomes readers' comments.** E-mail us at editors@historysociety.ca or write to *The Beaver*, PO Box 56060, Portage Place RPO, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0G9 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

New from UBC Press

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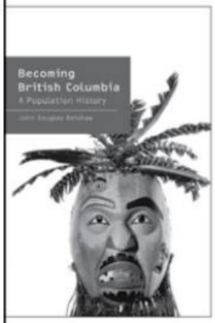

"*Becoming British Columbia* demonstrates the significance of demographic knowledge to our understanding of the province's history and its historiography. It provides another lens through which to view the history of the province, and one that has the potential to change the way we think about British Columbia's past."

– Ruth Sandwell, author of *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia*

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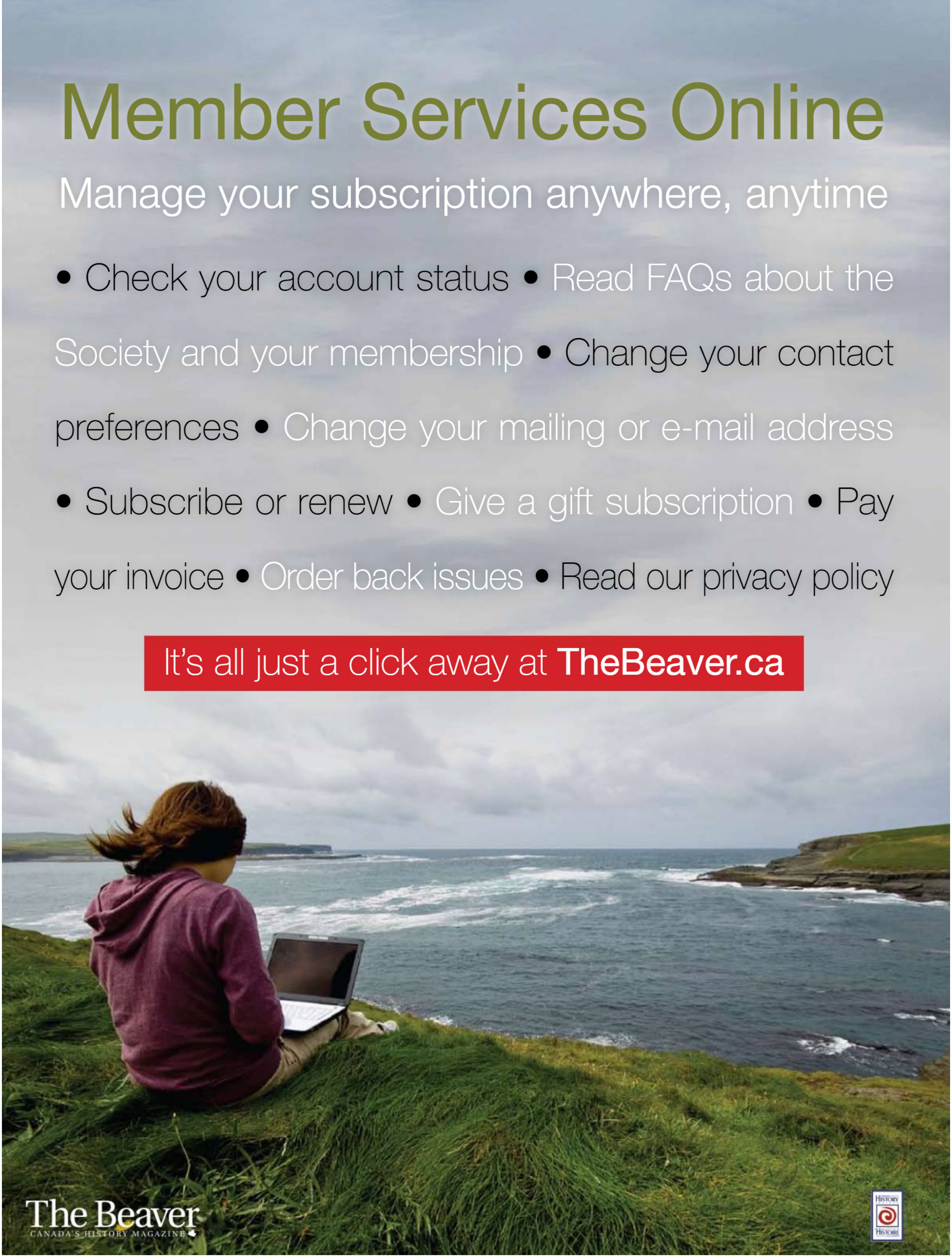

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The Beaver
CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

Palette from the past

The thought of architecture in Newfoundland and Labrador brings to mind brightly coloured row houses and pretty old clapboard homes by the sea. But the proud owners of such historic homes searched in vain for historically accurate paint colours — until June 2007, when the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and R.A. Templeton Ltd., a St. John's paint store, unveiled ninety-six historic colours of Newfoundland.

Many of the colours on the palette have been renamed to reflect Newfoundland themes. Black is still black and white is still white, but a light beige is renamed Sheilagh's Brush after a snowstorm that hits around St. Patrick's Day, and a dark pink is called Heart's Content for a town located on Trinity Bay. A six-coloured "Jelly Bean Palette" features the vivid, more contemporary colours common to the row houses in downtown St. John's.

"People want to have a historic home," says Dale Jarvis, a provincial folklorist at the Heritage Foundation. "They're proud of the work they've put into them and want to be as correct as they can be."

Jarvis says it's not required that homeowners use the historic colours, but the Heritage Foundation strongly recommends it, especially if the home is heritage-designated. When federal, provincial, or municipal governments recognize buildings that are proven to be historically valuable, their preservation is then subject to regulations.

Procedures for heritage designation vary across the country, but the standards and guidelines of Canada's Historic Places Initiative are often referenced as a source for responsible preservation practices. The initiative, which began in 2001 as a collaboration between heritage experts and all levels of government, recommends preserving "character-defining" features of historic sites with as little intervention as possible.

HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Problems arise when buildings have been altered over different periods of time, says Dr. Jennifer McKendry, an architectural historian from Kingston, Ontario. Decisions need to be made on whether past changes should be respected as historical.

Choices also need to be made regarding which buildings deserve preservation. "There are all kinds of heritage buildings," she says. "They're not just houses, forts, and churches. We should also be looking at jails, hospitals, and insane asylums." While such institutions often have not been considered important, McKendry says they should be preserved to "represent the whole of society."

Jarvis says that when paint colour is a defining characteristic of a historic building, steps are taken to keep that colour on the building. For example, Newfoundland's railway stations were usually painted a yellow and green that are known as Reid Newfoundland colours after the family that operated the province's railway from 1898 to 1923.

— Jen Clark, with files from Chris Webb

TAKE THE DAY OFF

REFUS GLOBAL

August 9

To remember the day in 1948 when the anti-establishment manifesto *Refus global* (Total Refusal) was released in Montreal. Fight the power.

Currents

Our home & native ...

Pacemaker

Considered the father of biomedical engineering in Canada, Dr. John Hopps is best known for discovering a way to make stopped hearts beat again.

Hopps was born in Winnipeg and completed an electrical engineering degree at the University of Manitoba in 1941, before taking a position at the National Research Council in Ottawa.

When the Banting Institute's Dr. Wilfred Bigelow and Dr. John Callaghan began researching cold surgery in Toronto in 1949, Hopps went there to help. They found that a heart that stopped due to low temperatures would beat again at a normal rhythm if gently stimulated by electricity — a discovery that sent Hopps back to his NRC lab.

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL CANADA

Dr. John Hopps testing an early pacemaker prototype.

Hopps's first cardiac pacemaker was too large to fit inside a human body. It was about thirty centimetres in length, used vacuum tubes, and ran on household current. But his work led to the pacemaker that was implanted in a Swedish man in 1958.

Hopps benefited from his own invention. He received his own pacemaker in 1984, which was replaced thirteen years later when the battery weakened. He died in 1998. A plaque commemorating Hopps's work is being unveiled September 29 in Toronto as part of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers' 125th-anniversary celebrations.

— Jen Clark

Living history

Whaling gun re

When John Carruthers went shopping for old duck decoys at a retired hunter's home in Escott, near Brockville in southern Ontario, he didn't expect to stumble on an artifact from one of the most storied ships in Canada's history.

The owner told Carruthers, who builds flintlock rifles as a hobby at his home in Morrisburg, Ontario, that he had gotten rid of his guns because of new legislation and the

August 26

To note the day in 1961 that Prime Minister John Diefenbaker announced annual grants for amateur sports. Get in the game.

September 11

To celebrate the first Canadian track and field meet, held at the Caer Howell Grounds near Toronto on this date in 1839. Jump for joy.

John Carruthers poses with the whaling gun once used on the *Erik* and a model of the ship. Below right: the *Erik*.

CHRISTIAN FLEURY

surfaces

paperwork involved in keeping them.

"However," he said, "I did keep one gun that might interest you." He rummaged around in his workshop and garage and found parts of the weapon in four different places. Stamped on the barrel were the words "Erik, London, D. Neave and Sons, Makers, Dundee, 1866."

It turned out that the hunter had in his possession a harpoon gun from the *Erik*, a whaler built in 1865 that at one point served as a supply ship for explorer Robert Peary's Arctic expeditions. It was also used as a sealing ship in Newfoundland and a Hudson's Bay Company supply ship in the Arctic. In 1918, a German U-boat sank it near St. Pierre and Miquelon.

The harpoon gun evidently did not go down with the ship.

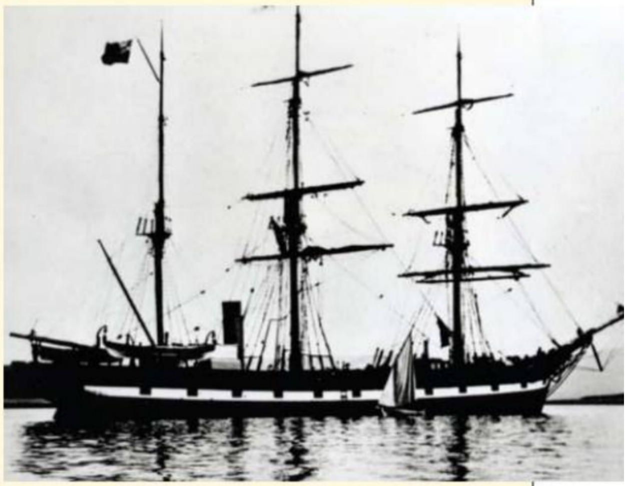
"I was told by the former owner that the old gun had been dumped on Baffin Island back in the 1800s," says Carruthers. Inuit people brought the gun to a DEW Line station in the 1950s. From there it was taken to Montreal by a DEW Line worker from Finland. That worker was the brother-in-law of the man who ended up selling the gun to Carruthers.

After acquiring the gun in the early 1990s, Carruthers restored it and researched the history of the ship to which it belonged. The latter quest had him delving into the Hudson's Bay Company archives in Winnipeg, as well as records in Washington, D.C.

It also brought Carruthers and his wife to Scotland for a vacation. There they met the curator of the Dundee Museum, who found a log of the *Erik* for 1876 and forty photographs taken by the ship's gunner. These photographs are now on microfilm in the National Archives in Ottawa, where they are titled "The Cruise of The Erik."

Carruthers plans to offer the harpoon gun to a museum — perhaps The Rooms in St. John's, Newfoundland.

"But I am not quite ready to give it up just yet," says Carruthers, aged seventy. "It has inspired me to do things that I never did before, like building a thirty-six-inch model of the *Erik* from scratch with only photos found in books to copy from. I tied 768 knots in the shrouds and rat lines using the wife's tweezers, crochet hooks, and needle threaders!"



MANITOBA ARCHIVES

Carruthers was fortunate to have stumbled on to this discovery. Good fortune in fact was part of the vessel's legacy — the *Erik* was considered a "lucky ship" by those who sailed her.

To learn more about the *Erik*, visit TheBeaver.ca and follow the links to a story from a 1936 issue of *The Beaver*, entitled "The Erik's Saga," by G.A. Cuthbertson.

— **Nelle Oosterom**

September 19

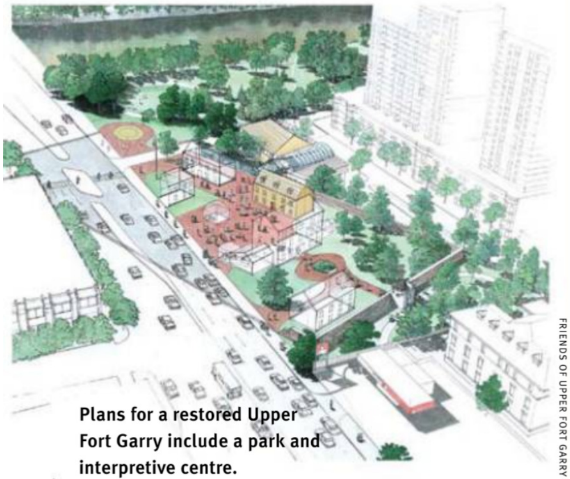
To observe the day in 1899 when a rock slide in Quebec City buried about a hundred people, killing forty-five. Blame it on the rain.

September 24

To mark the day in 1778 when Maliseet and Mi'Kmaq leaders swore allegiance to Britain at Fort Howe, Nova Scotia. Make a promise.

Currents

Holding the fort



Plans for a restored Upper Fort Garry include a park and interpretive centre.

FRIENDS OF UPPER FORT GARRY

Two years after a developer nearly won the rights to build a twenty-storey apartment building on the site of the former administrative centre of a large swath of western North America, Upper Fort Garry is back on the map.

In 1836, Hudson's Bay Company Governor George Simpson decided to build a fort near the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers — the heart of today's downtown Winnipeg. From there, the company administered territory stretching from Hudson Bay to the Pacific Ocean, and from Oregon north to Alaska and the Arctic Ocean.

The fort served as a social centre for the growing Red River Settlement and housed British troops sent to counter American expansionism. After the fort was dismantled in the 1880s, only the main gate and part of a wall were left intact. The Hudson's Bay Company donated the gate and surrounding land to the city of Winnipeg "as a public park forever" in 1897.

But in 2007, the city decided to sell a portion of the fort's former site to a developer. That's when a number of prominent Manitobans sprung into action with a proposal for a heritage centre and park. After a public relations campaign, and with millions of dollars in donations secured, the volunteer group Friends of Upper Fort Garry learned last year that the city would instead turn over the land for an expanded park and interpretive centre.

Several recent structures that occupy the site are slated for demolition, but the historic Manitoba Club building will remain. "Footprints" will show where original buildings sat. **— B.T. & P.K.**

Betty Oliphant

PHOTO COURTESY OF CANADA'S NATIONAL BALLET SCHOOL

By the numbers

Canada's National Ballet School

Celia Franca and Betty Oliphant founded Canada's National Ballet School in Toronto in 1959. Since then, the school has trained top Canadian dancers including Karen Kain and Veronica Tennant. The acclaimed Jarvis Street Campus, which incorporates preserved heritage buildings and contemporary architecture, opened in 2005 next to the school's original Maitland Street site. The latter reopened in 2008 as an expanded student residence. On September 28, the NBS celebrates its fiftieth anniversary.

29 The length in minutes of *Flamenco at 5:15*, a National Film Board of Canada documentary about flamenco classes at the NBS that won the 1984 Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject.

15,000,000 Dollars received from an anonymous donation in July 2004 that helped fund the school's Project Grand Jeté redevelopment.

2008 The year Project Grand Jeté was awarded a Governor General's Medal in Architecture.

157 Approximate number of students training full-time at the school, ranging from grade 6 to post-secondary students.

39 The number of male dancers at the NBS, up from only nine in 1959.

5 to 7 Hours spent rehearsing by post-secondary students each day from Monday to Friday, with two to five hours of rehearsal time Saturdays.

665 The number of students who have graduated from the school's Professional Ballet Program since 1959.

— Compiled by Julijana Capone

For Canadian history news updated weekly, read the News Splash! at TheBeaver.ca .

Christopher Moore

Thinking globally

Canadian historian sees the connections between Canada and the world.

Not all the historians in Canada are historians of Canada. Case in point: Timothy Brook.

Brook is Toronto-born and-schooled, and he now teaches in Vancouver. But he's a historian of China, and his recent book *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* seems at first to be about Holland in the era of the Dutch masters. When I met Brook recently in Vancouver, he did seem truly a global historian. Vancouver is his home, but *Vermeer's Hat* has been published around the world.

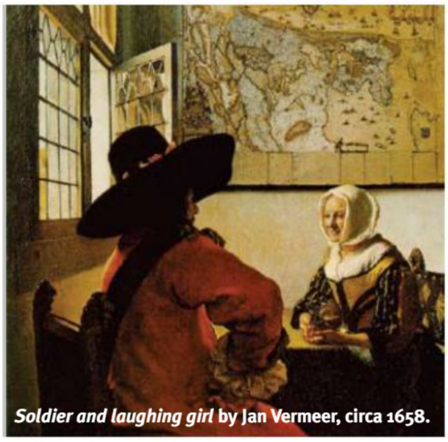
Brook was just in from Oxford, where he taught part of the year, by way of New York, where *Vermeer's Hat* had just been given the Lynton History Prize. He was about to go to California, where he was due to lecture. Still, the author and the book — and the hat — say something fresh about Canada and the world.

"I've been looking at Vermeer since 1971," says Brook. Looking at Dutch interior scenes from the mid-1600s, he noticed maps and globes, Chinese porcelains, South American silver, Virginia tobacco — all testifying to the influences of the wide world. In Brook's telling, Vermeer's masterworks become doorways to the world, and not least to the largest, richest nation in the world, the China of the late Ming empire — which happens to be Brook's field of scholarly expertise.

How does a kid from Toronto become a historian of China? For Tim Brook, an interest in Chinese philosophy led him into summer language courses in Mandarin. He was offered a student exchange in Beijing, where he mastered the language. Soon he was working on a Harvard doctorate on one corner of Chinese history in the 1600s. Not that it's easy, but Brook had found the kind of opportunity that sometimes opens to Canadian history students, and he seized it.

Teaching in Edmonton and Toronto as the only Chinese specialist around, Brook seized on global history as a way to find common ground with fellow historians. "The sixteenth century is the age of discovery, but the seventeenth century is the age of people starting to move, the possibility of a global economy, intercultural relations across the globe."

It proved not hard for this Canadian historian of the world to find Canada in world history — or the world in Canadian history. In Vermeer's 1658 painting of a Dutch military man in a splendiferous beaver hat, the felt for the hat probably came from Samuel de Champlain's infant colony of New France. Champlain's colony existed, he reminds us, because explorers like Champlain were hoping to get through Canada to China — hence the town called Lachine on Montreal Island. Today we mouth platitudes about Canada as a global nation and the importance of China. Brook reminds us: Champlain and Vermeer knew that in the 1600s.


Soldier and laughing girl **by Jan Vermeer, circa 1658.**

Historical studies are grasping that truth, Brook thinks.

"History used to be 'siloed': Canadians did Canadian history, Europeans did European history. That's eased off. There is a much greater fluidity, because no history can be thought about on its own."

There's another boundary Brook wants to erode. He wants to write for people who are not obliged to read him as well as for scholars who must.

To that end, Brook took creative writing workshops as well as graduate seminars, which may be why *Vermeer's Hat* has, as he puts it, "an aesthetic structure, not a logical structure." He wonders about the way universities teach students about writing. "We want them to think about historical questions, we want them to find sources. But we don't give seminars on how to craft readable historical writing. It's just not what we do, and I think it's too bad."

Along with his scholarship on Ming China, Brook has produced politically engaged works on such subjects as the Tiananmen massacre of 1989 and the massacre at Nanjing in 1937–38.

"I think that engagement is there in *Vermeer's Hat*," he says. It's about "the importance of a cosmopolitan view of the world, a compassionate view of the world. If we can become more conscious of the disasters we have caused in the past, maybe we can not do them again."

The compassion comes out in the respect the book gives to battered, obscure people "whose histories were destroyed" by the collisions of civilizations: characters such as Fulgencio Orozco, a Portuguese who died poor amid the wealth of Potosi, the silver city of Spanish Peru, or Alexander Bosquet, a Scot who drifted to France, then sailed with the Dutch to the Far East, and then, shipwrecked in Korea, became Korean.

Still, Brook finds a positive message there, too: "I think personal identities were actually more fluid then than today. We don't need to be threatened by alternate identities, because people have always been moving."

Christopher Moore comments regularly in *The Beaver.*

Your Story

That Lovely Country

Jennifer Andrews reminisces about two journeys to the wilds of Alberta that left a lasting impression.

Lois Foster-Mellier of England enjoys Alberta's backcountry from horseback in 1936.

JENNIFER ANDREWS

In the 1930s there were no gap years, and any well-brought-up young English lady didn't backpack, but instead travelled with a chaperone — or not at all.

For her twenty-first birthday present, my mother Lois Foster-Melliar was given a trip to Canada. Her destination was a dude ranch in southern Alberta owned by a man named R.M. Patterson — an adventurer and explorer who would go on to gain fame for his nature writing.

The journey from England by steamship, and then by train from Quebec to Calgary, took almost two weeks. When my mother finally arrived in Calgary, she was met by Patterson.

jjIt was 1936, and at the time, Patterson and his wife, Marigold, owned the Buffalo Head Ranch on the Highwood River near Longview, southwest of Calgary. The dirty thirties were tough for most people on the Prairies, and the Pattersons were no exception. With a growing family to feed, R.M.P. had decided to try dude wrangling.

Soon, my mother was on her way to Patterson's ranch. She kept a diary of her adventures, and in it, she marvels at roads that were pot-holed tarmac to the edge of town, before becoming "flints and gravel just scattered over a cart track."

Despite the roughness of the roads, Lois quickly fell in love with the landscape and the ranching lifestyle. It was all heaven. She loved to ride western style, as opposed to the sidesaddle style she practised in England; in her diary, she drew sketches of a cinch, a quirt, and a diamond hitch. Riding to Flat Creek Lakes one day she wrote, "First we came to Bertie's cabin — the sort of cabin you read about but never imagine exists; it had a little corral round it and a stream running near and there was a thick background of spruce and poplar; and, of course, the mountains."

During my mother's three-month stay, she became great friends with Patterson. The pair enjoyed a mutual respect for each other's daring and humour. She also became good friends with Cecy Baldwin, the lady who was employed to look after the Patterson children and with whom she rode for many miles.

In later years, when Patterson began to write, Cecy would send me copies of *The Beaver* magazine, while Patterson would send copies of his books to my mother. Imagine my surprise when I found my mother mentioned in the pages! She is the "Lois" of the unruly hair. In one adventure, "spluttering cries came from the osprey's nest in the bow" during a madcap ride down the rapids with R.M.P.

Occasionally R.M.P. would visit us in England. His tall, wiry frame unfolded from our car and we children stared up at his Harry Potter glasses, which gave him an academic air belying the intrepid explorer — but the tales we heard!

I had long thrilled to the descriptions of the wild beauty of Alberta. In 1969, I was finally able to see it for myself. I was a lawyer by that time, and a position in a law firm had called me to Boston. After eighteen months in Boston, I was on the road heading for Canada, via New Orleans and the west coast of North America. I wondered: What would it be like, this Highwood country, nearly forty years later?

Visiting Patterson in British Columbia, I told him that I had to go out to the Highwood country. He sent me to visit a rancher there. It was branding time, and the rancher offered me prairie oysters. For the sake of my mother's reputation, I could not refuse! Then I rode that country and I felt so surely in my mother's skin that I knew things weren't that different than when she had visited all those years before.

Today I live in Australia. Wide grassy landscapes stretch to the indigo hills; the sheep, their heads together, seek shade from the scorching sun in the relentless blue sky of a drought summer. Like the Highwood country, it is so beautiful, yet so tough.

Only yesterday, as I prepared our little guest cabin — which has no electricity or running water — my mind flashed back to something R.M.P. had said in a letter to my mother: "God what I would give for that lovely country back again, just as it was."

It has been thirty years since my journey to the Highwood country. And yet, the effect of that "lovely country" has been passed on from mother, to daughter, and now, to my own children — a deep love of adventure, of wild country, and of those who live there.

Jennifer Andrews was born in England. She now lives in Tasmania, where she and her husband have raised four children. She has had articles published in *The Australian*, *The Countryman* and other magazines. Her mother, now Lois Wright, turned ninety-four in May.

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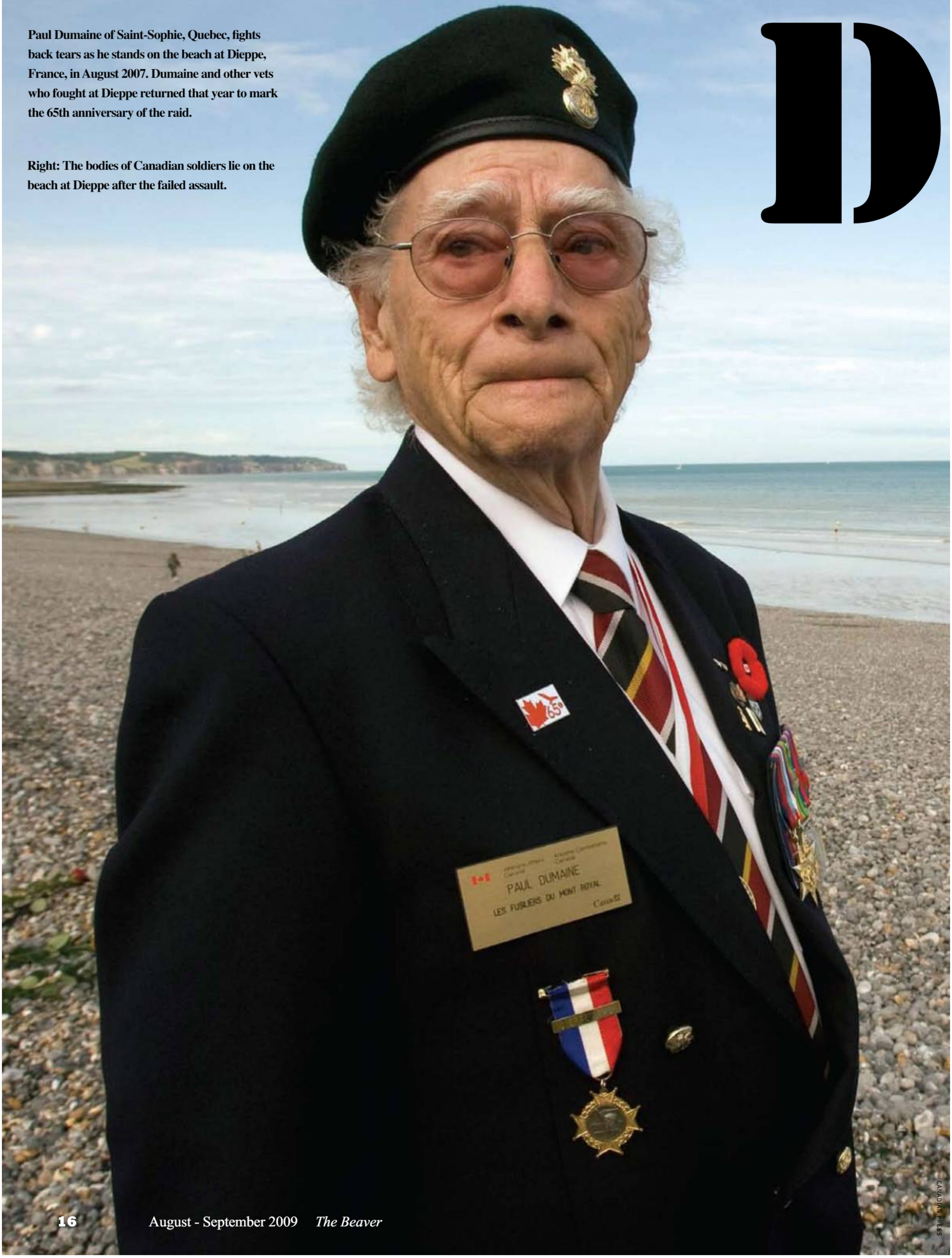

PAUL DUMAINE
LES FUSILIERS DU MONT ROYAL
Canada
65e

Paul Dumaine of Saint-Sophie, Quebec, fights back tears as he stands on the beach at Dieppe, France, in August 2007. Dumaine and other vets who fought at Dieppe returned that year to mark the 65th anniversary of the raid.

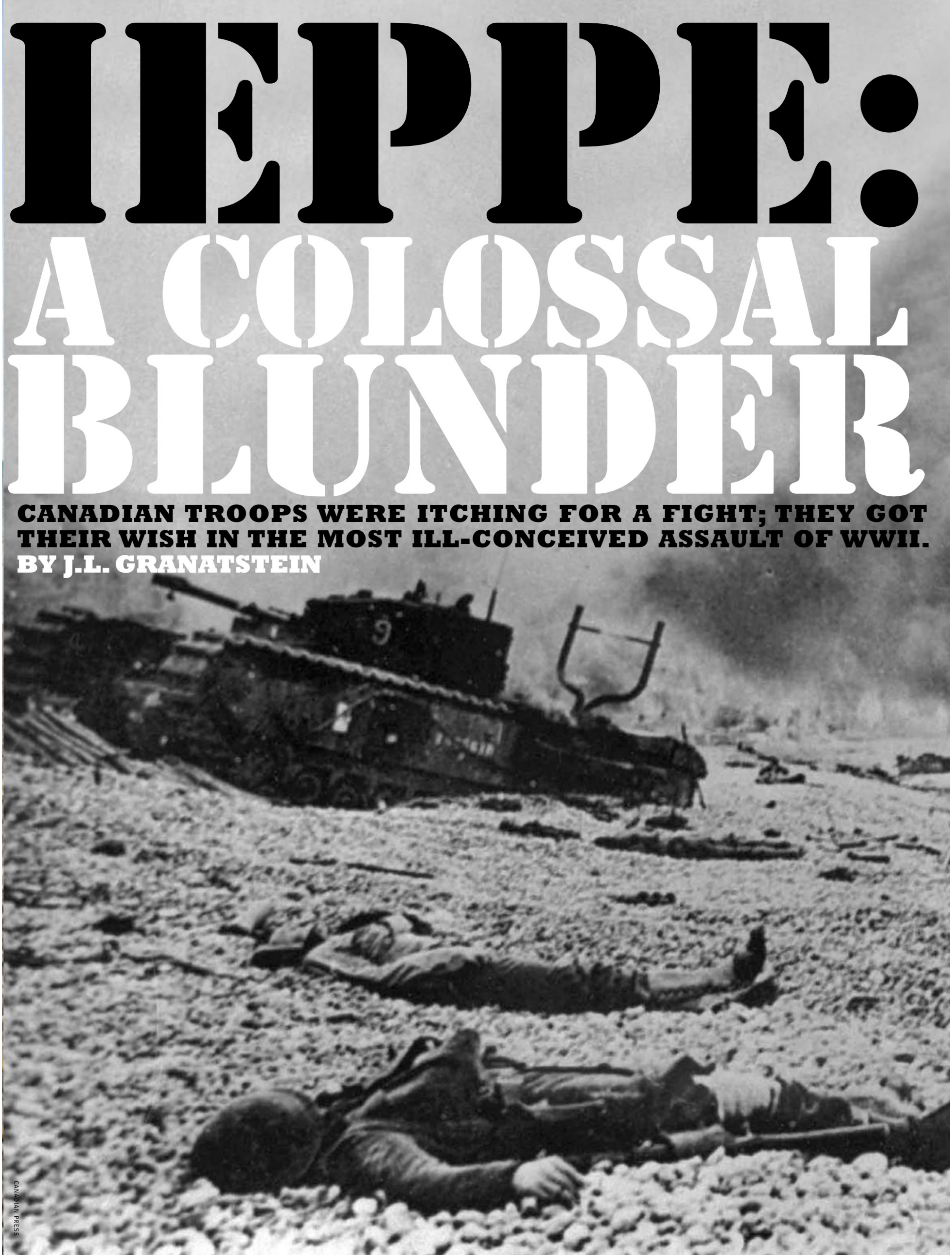
Right: The bodies of Canadian soldiers lie on the beach at Dieppe after the failed assault.

CANADIAN PRESS

IEPPE: A COLOSSAL BLUNDER

CANADIAN TROOPS WERE ITCHING FOR A FIGHT; THEY GOT THEIR WISH IN THE MOST ILL-CONCEIVED ASSAULT OF WWII.

BY J.L. GRANATSTEIN



CANADIAN PRESS

The Dieppe raid of August 19, 1942, was a disaster. Within a few hours of landing on the French beach, almost a thousand Canadian soldiers died and twice that many were taken prisoner. Losses of aircraft and naval vessels were very high. It took a long time for the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, which had provided the foot soldiers for the assault, to recover.

This debacle, spun by those responsible as a glorious failure that paved the way for D-Day two years later, sits like a scar on the Canadian memory of the war, and so it should. Contrary to the public relations experts of 1942, Dieppe was a colossal blunder.

The raid began in optimism out of the Canadians' desire to see action. By the spring of 1942, Canadian soldiers had been in Britain for more than two years without combat. For the expanding Canadian army in Britain, there was only training and more boring training, while the troops helped defend England against an invasion that was never to come.

The idea of conducting a large raid on the French coast originated in Combined Operations Headquarters, commanded by Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. The planners wanted to test the theory and practice of amphibious warfare, and essentially to determine if a defended port could be seized. That was the main tactical reason – but there were political reasons too.

These Canadian troops training in southern England in 1941 were eager to see live action.

CANADIAN PRESS

The Americans, in the war only since December 1941, wanted to create a second front on the Continent as soon as possible, a goal that Moscow, bearing the full brunt of the war against Germany on the eastern front, shared. In Canada, politicians wanted their troops to get into action to gain battle experience and to appease a public clamouring for heroes.

Overseas, Lieutenant General Harry Crerar fretted about the "continued lack of participation" in operations and the difficulty of maintaining the "desired keenness and morale." The Canadian generals knew their restless soldiers needed action, and the troops themselves, tired of being asked by their English girlfriends if they would ever fight, largely shared that opinion. "Like every other soldier," Corporal Robert Prouse of the Canadian Provost Corps recalled in a published account of his war experiences, "I was bored to tears with the long inaction and was itching for battle." Everyone wanted and needed a big raid on the Continent.

Thus, in the winter of 1942, when Crerar heard rumours that Mountbatten was planning to attack Dieppe, he demanded that the British chiefs of staff select Canadian troops for the task. Crerar was at that time acting as commander of the Canadian Corps while General Andrew McNaughton was in Canada on sick leave. Crerar told one of his officers "it will be a tragic humiliation if American troops get into action … before Canadians, who have been waiting in England for three years."

By the time McNaughton returned to England in April 1942, the British had agreed. The 2nd Division was chosen for the job. General Bernard Montgomery, the operational commander under whom the Canadians served, thought it the best-trained Canadian formation. And Montgomery viewed its commanding officer, Major-General J. Hamilton Roberts, as the best of the Canadian division commanders.

As junior allies, the Canadians had not been involved in the original planning for the raid. But now, with 2nd Division selected, they had a large share in determining the details of the operation. Mountbatten's headquarters continued to be heavily involved, and so too was Montgomery, who had the "go/no go" responsibility. His view of the operation on July 1 was that it had "good prospects of success" if the weather was good, the navy put troops ashore at the right places, and the troops had "average luck."

Two days later, Crerar wrote that the Canadian commanders of the raid "expressed full confidence in being

CANADIAN PRESS

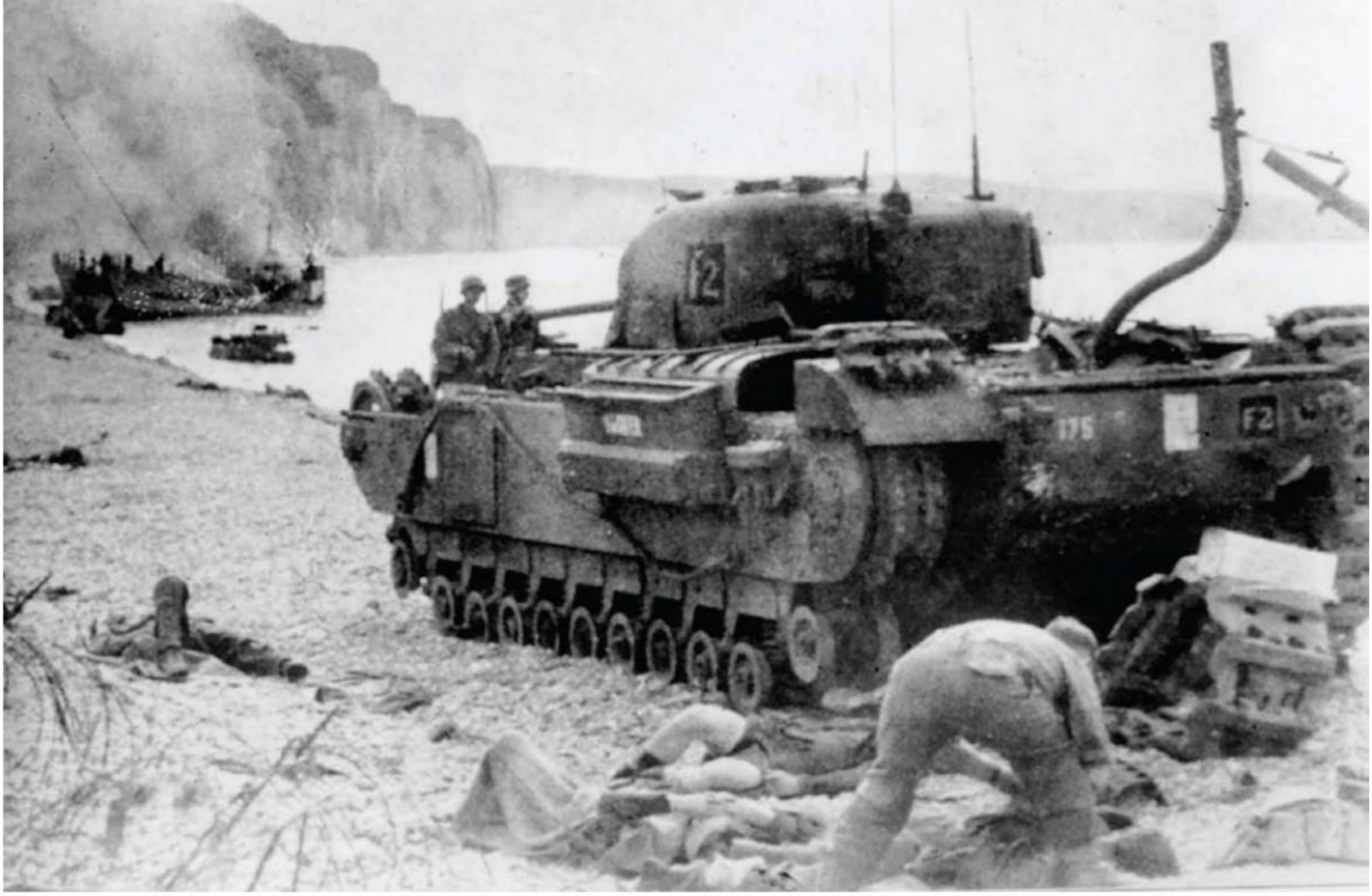
THE RAID ON DIEPPE: 19 AUGUST 1942

3:45-48 AM

The first setback occurs when Allied landing ships and their escorts encounter a German convoy. A battle breaks out at sea, alerting Nazi forces on shore. The Allies lose the element of surprise they had hoped for.

4:50 AM

Allied attackers land on the beaches at Vasterival and Pourville, encountering very little resistance. British No. 4 Commando knocks out a German shore battery at Vasterival and retreats. The South Saskatchewan Regiment reaches Pourville on schedule, surprising the German defenders.



A destroyed Churchill tank sits on the beach after the Dieppe raid.

able to carry out their tasks — given a break in luck." Senior officers ordinarily put more faith in good planning and in their troops' ability than in luck.

Operation Rutter, the original raid, was scrubbed by Montgomery in the first week of July 1942 because of bad weather. In the interval between Rutter and the renewed operation, Montgomery left for the Middle East to find his destiny. The 2nd Division's destiny would prove to be very different.

The decision to let loose Operation Jubilee, as the planners dubbed the August raid, came from Mountbatten, McNaughton, Crerar, and Roberts. The commanders knew that soldiers had talked in the pubs about the cancelled raid on Dieppe in July; they banked on the likelihood that the Germans would not believe that the Allies could be so foolish as to have the same troops attack the same target a month later. Crerar's comment on the revived plan, offered on August 11, was that "given an even break in luck and good navigation" the raid "should" prove successful. Once more, luck was the key. Unfortunately, there was none in Operation Jubilee.

The plan called for 4,963 officers and men drawn from the infantry battalions of the 2nd Division and an armoured regiment from the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade to assault Dieppe and surrounding areas from the sea. Covered by seventy-four squadrons of fighters and fighter-bombers overhead and ten small ships offshore, and accompanied by tanks of the Calgary Regiment, infantry from the Essex Scottish from southwestern Ontario and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry were to land on the beach in front of Dieppe.

Toronto's Royal Regiment of Canada was to go ashore on a tiny beach under a cliff at Puys to the east. The South Saskatchewan Regiment and Ottawa's Cameron Highlanders were to disembark at Pourville to the west. The Camerons intended to go almost eight kilome-

5:06 AM

The landing by the Royal Regiment of Canada at Puys beach is late, giving German defenders plenty of time to take aim with withering machine gun fire. Stalled on the beach, about 500 Canadians are killed or captured. The unit surrenders at 8:30 a.m.

5:10 AM

British No. 3 Commando lands at Petit Berneval. Part of the force takes out a German shore battery. But they encounter stiff resistance elsewhere on the beach and suffer heavy casualties.

tres inland to attack an airfield, a German headquarters, and destroy a coastal battery. The floating reserve was the Fusiliers Mont-Royal. The commandos' task was to eliminate German batteries east and west of the three main landing areas.

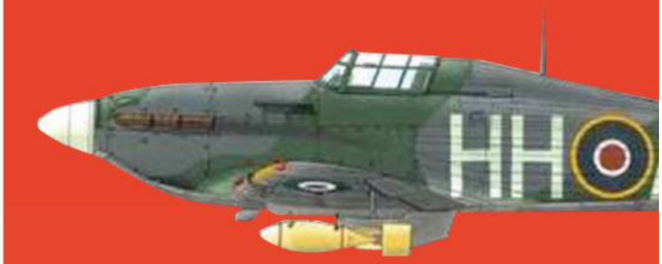
The intention of the raid was to take the town of Dieppe, establish a defensive perimeter, and hold it just long enough to permit the destruction of harbour facilities. The raiders were then to depart by sea. There were no heavy bombers to soften up the defences, and the Royal Navy declined to assign battleships to support the assault — the English Channel was too risky for that with the Luftwaffe nearby. The German defences at Dieppe were in the hands of the 302nd Infantry Division, and ample reserves were close by.

The raiders boarded their landing craft on August 18 and set sail that night. Very quickly, everything unravelled, starting with the flotilla running into a German coastal convoy. The firing alerted the coastal defences, removing the element of surprise on which the entire plan depended. The Royal Navy landed the Canadians on Puys' Blue Beach thirty-five minutes late at a time when they could easily be seen by two platoons of Germans on the beach and in a pillbox on the cliff overlooking it. Attackers from the Royal Regiment of Canada were cut to pieces by German machine guns and mortars, and only a few made it to the top of the cliff. Those still alive on the beach surrendered at about 8:30 a.m.; those atop the cliff held out until the late afternoon. Only sixty-five Royals out of almost six hundred made it back to England.

At Pourville's Green Beach, the situation was only marginally better. The South Saskatchewan Regiment landed on time in darkness and achieved an element of surprise, but the Royal Navy landed part of the unit in the wrong place. One company, properly landed, took its objective. The rest, trying to cross the River Scie on a bridge, faced withering fire from the Germans perched on the cliffs on both sides of the landing beach. The South Sasks' commander, Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Merritt, led his men across by sheer force of will: "Come on over, there's nothing to it," he said, standing up and swinging his helmet. Merritt then led attacks up the hill with his troops, joined by part of the Cameron Highlanders (who had landed with their pipers playing).

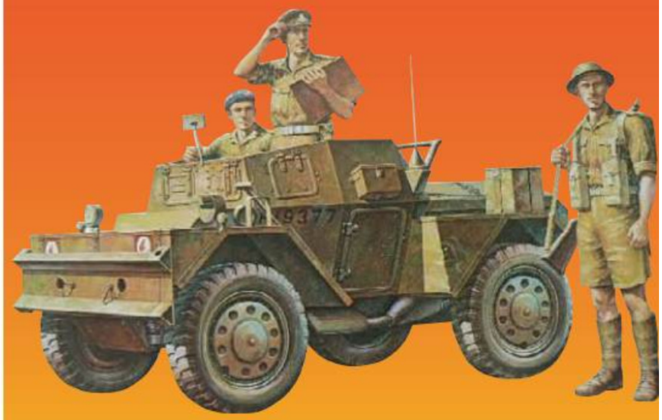
The remainder of the Camerons moved inland some two thousand metres until they encountered very heavy opposition and withdrew to the beach. The landing craft to pick them up were there, as planned, but very

WEAPO
AIRCRAFT, VEHICLES AND



THE HAWKER HURRICANE

The single-seat aircraft designed and built by Hawker Aircraft Ltd., England, and contracted to the Canada Car and Foundry Co. Ltd., evolved through several versions and adaptations. The Dieppe raid utilized the Hurricane Mk IIB, which was built in Canada. This version was fitted with interchangeable wings housing twelve 303 Browning guns and two 500-pound bombs. Together with the Spitfire, the Hurricane was an effective, versatile fighter. However, an inaccurate and insufficient air attack contributed to Dieppe's failure.



5:20 AM

At Pourville, the Cameron Highlanders land amid heavy fire. They split into two forces, with one heading inland. The inland group loses seventy-six men, is forced to retreat, and is successfully evacuated. The Essex Scottish Regiment and Royal Hamilton Light Infantry land in centre of Pourville Beach and are raked by machine gun fire. Allied commanders are erroneously told the entire Essex unit has broken through German lines.

5:35 AM

The 14th Canadian Tank (Calgary) Regiment hits the main beach under heavy mortar fire. The large shingle rocks that cover the beach break the treads of some tanks. Other tanks are stalled by concrete barriers farther inland. The unit suffers thirteen dead, and thirty-three wounded, while 138 are captured.

NS OF WAR

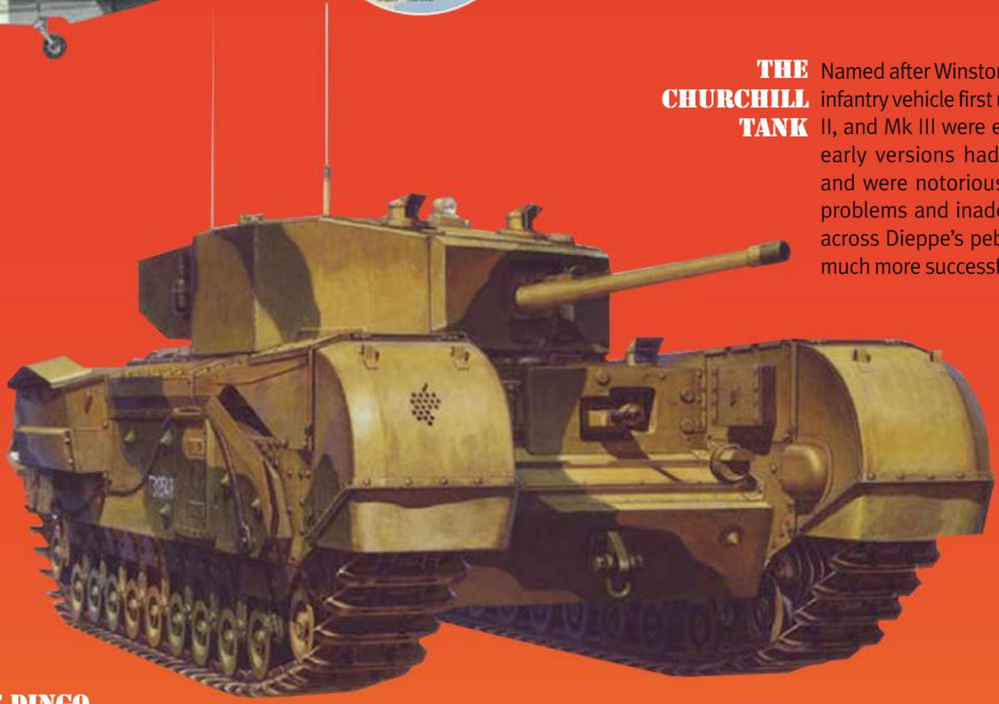
WEAPONS USED DURING THE DIEPPE RAID

OPERATION JUBILEE

The Dieppe raid took place on August 19, 1942 at the port of Dieppe, France, and surrounding coastline. The players included 4,694 men of the Canadian 2nd Division; 1,075 British troops; and 50 U.S. Rangers. The outcome: 3,439 Canadians and 242 British were either killed, wounded or captured; one destroyer and thirty-three landing craft were lost; 550 seamen were killed and 106 aircraft downed.

THE CHURCHILL TANK

Named after Winston Churchill, the tank was a British infantry vehicle first used at Dieppe. Variants Mk I, Mk II, and Mk III were employed during the raid. These early versions had been rushed into production and were notoriously unreliable, with mechanical problems and inadequate armament. Few made it across Dieppe's pebbled beach. Later models were much more successful.

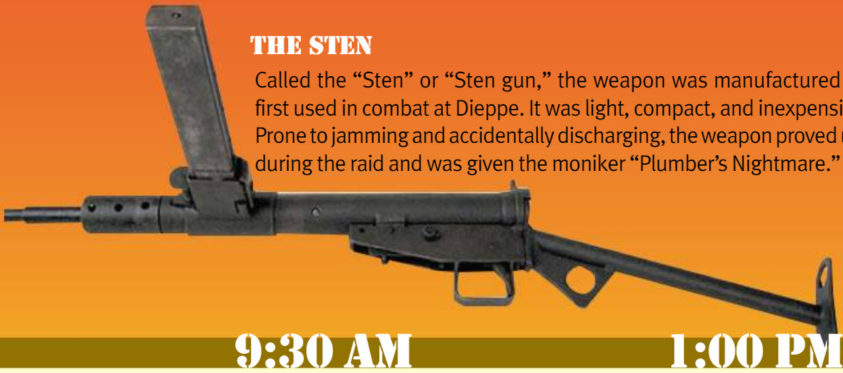


THE DINGO

Designed by Daimler, part of the BSA group (Birmingham Small Arms Company), it was officially designated the Daimler Scout Car but nicknamed the "Dingo." The Dingo was a small two-man transport with a well-armoured front and the engine at the rear. The early models had four-wheel steering, making it difficult to drive. Many were abandoned on the beach.

THE STEN

Called the "Sten" or "Sten gun," the weapon was manufactured in Britain and first used in combat at Dieppe. It was light, compact, and inexpensive to produce. Prone to jamming and accidentally discharging, the weapon proved undependable during the raid and was given the moniker "Plumber's Nightmare."



7:00 AM

Under the mistaken impression that the Essex have successfully broken through, Allied commanders send Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal into action at the main beach in order to reinforce the landing. They are hit by a hail of fire and 119 men are killed.

9:30 AM

Allied commanders realize their objective of raiding the port of Dieppe will not be met. They order a general withdrawal, but it's too late: 1,946 Canadians are taken prisoner.

1:00 PM

The withdrawal ends and the vessels return to England. The scale of the disaster will soon become clear: 907 Canadians killed and more than 586 wounded.

SOURCE: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

CANADIAN PRESS

Above: Canadian soldiers captured during the Dieppe raid.

Right: The view from a Nazi machine gun emplacement overlooking the Normandy coast.

few of the survivors could reach them through the hail of machine-gun fire the Germans laid down. Merritt stayed to organize the defences that let those who made it get away. He was taken prisoner and soon received the Victoria Cross.

The real disaster was in front of Dieppe on the Red and White Beaches. The enemy heard the firing from Puys and Pourville and was at the alert, so there was no surprise, and without surprise there was no chance of good luck. The only advantage had by the attackers was the air attack on the cliffs to the east of the beaches and the strafing of the beach defences by British Hurricane fighter planes. The infantry landed while the Germans tried to collect themselves after the air attack, but the navy deployed the Calgary's new Churchill tanks late,and the big armoured vehicles managed to do little, many failing to get over the seawall, others unable to move on the baseball-sized stones that made up the beach.

Without immediate fire support, the infantry took heavy casualties from the defenders perched on the cliffs that overlooked the beach and from the fortified casino at the west end of the beach. Some of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry broke through the Germans' wire and made it into the town. Like most of the RHLI, the Essex Scottish, raked by fire from the east and west headlands, died or fell wounded where they had landed. The carnage was compounded when garbled messages that suggested success led General Roberts to send in his reserve battalion. Montreal's Fusiliers Mont-Royal landed at 7 a.m. and met only slaughter.

By the time it was over, 907 Canadian soldiers had died on the beach, 586 had suffered wounds, and 1,946 had fallen into German hands. British Commandos and Royal Marines had forty-five killed and 197 wounded or captured. The Royal Navy lost twenty-eight percent of the vessels used in the raid and 550 officers and ratings. And the Royal and Royal Canadian Air Forces had 106 aircraft shot down, the heaviest single day's losses since the beginning of the war.

What had gone wrong? Everything is the proper answer, but some points should be stressed. Raiding France was a useful tool for the Allies to force the enemy to keep troops in the West rather than Russia, and yes, it was correct to test invasion theories. But it was a mistake to remount a once-cancelled operation, even if the Germans did not learn that Jubilee was a repeat of Rutter. It was an error not to have heavy bombing precede the assault and a huge blunder to fail to have big naval guns firing offshore.

The operational plan was unrealistic in the extreme — every problem was wished away for fear the raid might be cancelled and the Canadians not get their chance.

GAMMA

WHAT BECAME OF THEM ALL?

LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN

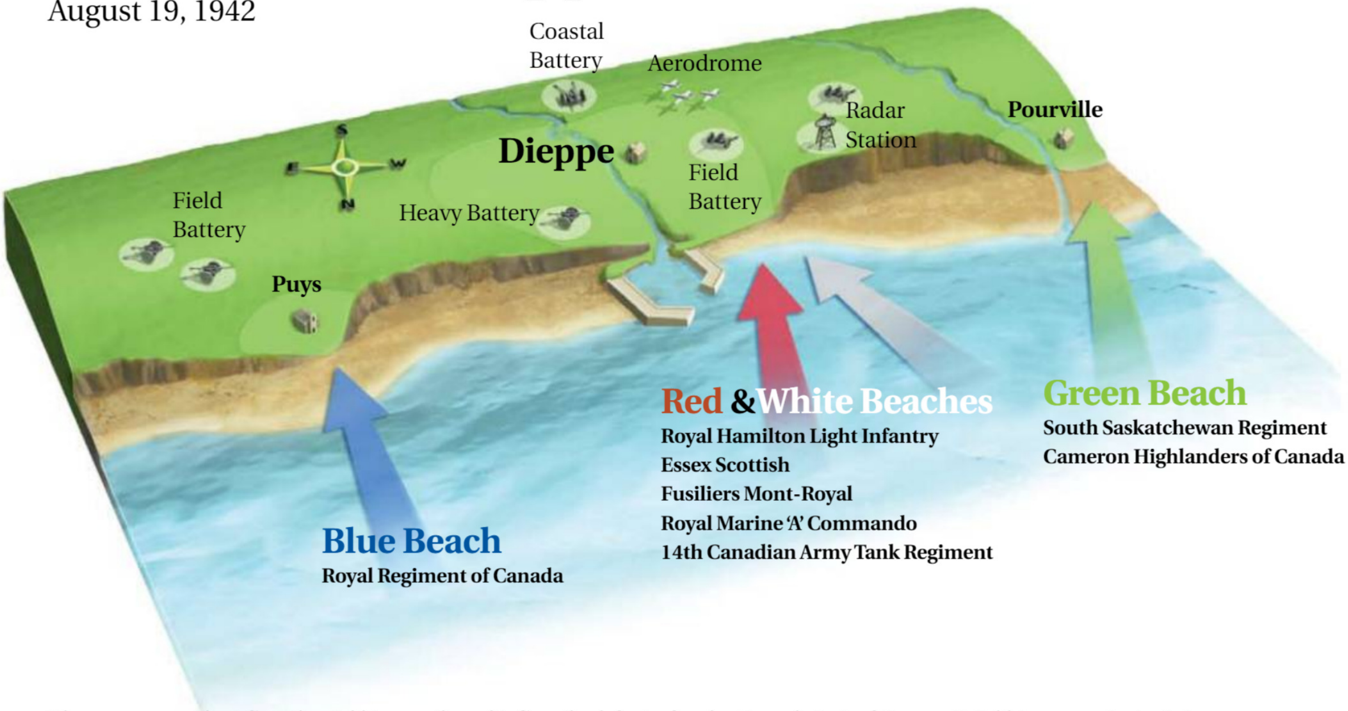
As head of Combined Operations, Mountbatten carried much of the blame for Dieppe. But Winston Churchill still had confidence in him and put him in charge of the South East Asia Command, where his reputation improved. After the war he became viceroy of India. He returned to the Royal Navy in 1953 and served as first sea lord. Later he became chief of defence staff. He was murdered in 1979 when a bomb planted by the IRA exploded on his boat. He was seventy-nine.

GENERAL BERNARD MONTGOMERY

Montgomery planned the Dieppe raid, called off the first attempt, and was sent to North Africa to command the Eighth Army before the actual raid occurred. He became famous for his victory at El Alamein, which was a turning point in the war. "Monty" led the invasion of France on June 6, 1944, and commanded British and Canadian troops through to VE-Day. As a field marshal after the war, he was chairman of defence for the Western European Union, and later became deputy commander of NATO. He died in 1976 at the age of eighty-eight.

Canadians at Dieppe

August 19, 1942


Coastal Battery
Aerodrome
Radar Station
Pourville
Dieppe
Field Battery
S
E
W
N
Field Battery
Heavy Battery
Puys
Red & White Beaches
Royal Hamilton Light Infantry
Essex Scottish
Fusiliers Mont-Royal
Royal Marine 'A' Commando
14th Canadian Army Tank Regiment
Green Beach
South Saskatchewan Regiment
Cameron Highlanders of Canada
Blue Beach
Royal Regiment of Canada

Dieppe was a combined Canadian-British operation, with Canadian infantry forming the main body of the assault. British commandos landed on the flanks (not shown on this map), at Vasterival, west of Pourville, and Petit Berneval, east of Puys.

MICHEL ROULEAU

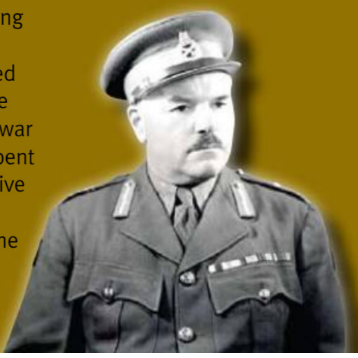
It made no sense, for example, to expect the Cameron Highlanders to go eight kilometres inland, presumably in contact with the Germans the whole way, and then to return to the coast for embarkation, all in a few hours. It was foolish to depend on surprise above all, and extremely foolish to go on with the attack once surprise was lost. It was hopelessly unrealistic to count on luck to make up for failures in planning.

Those failures in planning were huge, but there were more. It was utmost stupidity to attack a defended port where cliffs and headlands dominated the beaches. Where else would the Germans put their firepower? It was madness to land on a beach in front of Dieppe, where stones impeded the tanks' progress. Did no one think? Did no one try out the Churchill tanks' ability to manoeuvre with their treads on stones? It was as if Dieppe was on the far side of the planet where none had ever travelled, rather than being just across the English Channel, a day trip that English visitors had taken for decades. The lack of good sense, and the failure by Mountbatten's staff, Montgomery, and the Canadian planners to apply simple intelligence to the plan, created the monumental disaster. Dieppe was an object lesson on how not to mount an amphibious assault.

The Germans thought so, too. They had been surprised by the size of the raid, but the critique prepared at the Wehrmacht's 81st Corps had been very censorious about Jubilee's planning, which, being done "down to the last detail, limits the independence of action of the subordinate officers and leaves them no opportunity to make independent decisions…." There was some truth in that, and even more in another appraisal by the 302nd Division that suggested the air and naval support provided was "not nearly sufficient."

LIEUTENANT COLONEL CECIL MERRITT

Merritt received the Victoria Cross for his heroism in leading the South Saskatchewan Regiment at Dieppe. Wounded and taken prisoner during the raid, he spent the rest of the war as a PoW. After the war, he spent one term as a B.C. Conservative MP, then returned to his law practice. He died in 2001 at the age of ninety-one.



MAJOR GENERAL HAMILTON ROBERTS

Roberts received the Distinguished Service Order for his command of ground troops at Dieppe. The raid nonetheless effectively ended his career. He retired from the military in 1945 and went on to serve as a chief administrative officer for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. He died in 1963 in Jersey in the Channel Islands at the age of seventy-two.

The 81st Corps' report also commented that "the Canadians on the whole fought badly and surrendered afterwards in swarms." But the Wehrmacht's Fifteenth Army disagreed: "The enemy, almost entirely Canadian soldiers, fought — so far as he was able to fight at all — well and bravely."

Back in England, nothing mattered except that reputations be saved. The Dieppe raid became a model of how to spin the facts, as historian Timothy Balzer has conclusively demonstrated. Mountbatten's expert public relations team turned out to be better at preparing their media lines for failure than his planners had been at drawing up the strategy for operational success. Combined Operations Headquarters instantly claimed that the raid had been a great achievement and learning experience, and they held to that line even after the casualty lists became public.

CANADIAN PRESS

Allied forces establish a beachhead during the 1944 D-Day landings at Normandy, France.

Two years later, Mountbatten's boosters maintained that without Jubilee's invaluable invasion tutorial D-Day could not have succeeded. General Crerar said much the same, and, understandably perhaps, so have most Dieppe survivors, not wanting their comrades to have been thrown away for nothing.

Historians and the Canadian public have largely parroted the same arguments, perhaps because the idea of a Canadian defeat, any Canadian defeat, is just too hard to swallow. On the other hand, some now look on Mountbatten as utterly unqualified for his role, a man protected by his royal connections and public relations minions. The arguments will continue, but all need to remember the comment by Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Merritt, VC. "We were very glad to go, we were delighted. We were up against a very difficult situation and we didn't win: but to hell with this business of saying the generals did us dirt."

The key question, however, remains: Did the lessons learned from Operation Jubilee pave the way for D-Day, June 6, 1944? Yes, to some extent. After Dieppe, everyone recognized the need for better planning and a clearer chain of command. Operation Overlord — the name for the invasion of Europe that began with the D-Day landing — satisfied those requirements. There was heavy bombing, though it was not hugely successful in destroying beach defences. There was massive naval gun support, which was successful. There were better landing craft and specialized armoured vehicles, and the assault troops were far better trained. All of those things would likely have happened even without the Dieppe raid.

And instead of landing at a fortified port, the D-Day invasion went in over open beaches, and the Allies brought their artificial port, Mulberry, with them. Some lessons were learned, but most of them were lessons that had been mastered before. Many of them had been taught at staff colleges for decades. Most of them were simple common sense.

The *Globe and Mail*, a newspaper bitterly opposed to the Liberal government in Ottawa, was one of the few to openly criticize the Dieppe operation. In the spring of 1943, when ministers defended the raid in Parliament, the *Globe* called the raid "a fiasco of the first order; a tragedy of military blundering without parallel in this war." The newspaper had it right: The blunders at Dieppe were and remain inexcusable.

NAC PA201625

Historian J.L. Granatstein was the Director and CEO of the Canadian War Museum and is the author of *Canada's Army: Waging War and Keeping the Peace*.

Et Cetera

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For more on Dieppe, go to TheBeaver.ca

H.D.G. Crerar inspects a guard made up of members of the Perth Regiment.

THE FORGOTTEN GENERAL

General Harry Crerar made Canada's military into a force to be reckoned with. by Paul Dickson

July 1940 saw the beginnings of the first substantial debate about how Canada should exercise its new constitutional independence in pursuit of national interests. The military forces that Canada would ultimately field, and that would become such a source of national pride, had not yet been considered; a significant body of opinion, led by Prime Minister Mackenzie King, preferred an industrial and agricultural contribution, with a small, almost token, army effort. But the most influential voice in that tumultuous summer was that of the new army chief of the general staff, H.D.G. "Harry" Crerar. No single person did as much to shape Canada's military effort. He forged a short-lived consensus between political and military leaders that resulted in a military effort that was the maximum Canada could achieve, an effort that manifested itself in Canada's first field army — First Canadian Army — and the Allies' third-largest navy and fourth-largest air force.

Born in 1888, Crerar was part of a generation who had first to define and then to redefine what it meant to be Canadian. He viewed the military as a symbol of Canada's independence and sovereignty; he saw the army as an effective instrument for promoting the integration and civic identity of the new nation.

He also understood the costs that came with using the military. Crerar's ideas were forged by his wrenching experience of the First World War: His younger brother was killed and his older brother was severely wounded. This cemented in his mind the need for a professional military, and Crerar joined the permanent forces after the war ended. The interwar period demonstrated that Canadians and their political leaders did not share his view. But as Canada's constitutional position changed during the 1930s, Crerar concluded that proof of Canada's maturity was its willingness to defend itself.

When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, King intended that Canada's contribution, and liability, would be strictly limited. Memories of First World War casualty lists and divisive debates over conscription were foremost in his mind. On June 5, King spoke to the Liberal caucus on the "necessity of keeping Canada united." He would concede that a two-division corps might be necessary to satisfy English-Canadian sentiment, but no more.

Crerar had no doubts that Canada's military contribution had to be significant; he believed it should share the risks of defeating the Axis powers. In late June, as the British considered returning to the Continent to shore up the collapsing French armies, Crerar, then in the United Kingdom, advised that "the Canadian forces now available over here should be regarded as available to accept the same responsibilities, however dangerous, as those which it was proposed to allot to similar British formations."

Returning to Canada as chief of the general staff from July 1940 to December 1941, Crerar was able to convince the government to support a dramatic expansion of the army, despite the opposition of King. The chiefs of staff of the navy and air force followed suit; all three services expanded to unprecedented sizes. Crerar's first memorandum to Defence Minister J.L. Ralston underlined that proper preparations in 1940–41 would also prevent any return "to the stagnant backwaters" of the interwar army.

Crerar's goals also manifested themselves in the pursuit of missions for the Canadian army. He was concerned in part about its inexperience, as months of training stretched to years. The relative inactivity through 1941 and 1942 contrasted with the First World War and the risks then being undertaken by other Commonwealth armies. He was also fearful of the impact of inactivity on recruiting and — if the war ended before Canada's army could contribute to the defeat of Nazi Germany — on the postwar military.

Consequently, when asked in September 1941 for troops to reinforce the garrison at Hong Kong, Crerar warned of the military risks and advised that nothing should hinder the buildup of Canadian forces in the U.K. But he concluded that if the British had already made the decision to reinforce the garrison, the question of whether Canadian troops should be sent was ultimately a political choice, or even a moral decision.

The same logic explains Crerar's support through the autumn of 1941 and into 1942, as acting commander 1st Canadian Corps, of the Canadian involvement in raiding operations. He believed that morale, both in the army and at home in Canada, required action, and that support and voluntary enlistment suffered from the knowledge that Canadian troops trained and waited while others fought.

When Crerar caught wind of a larger and more ambitious raid against the port of Dieppe, he persuaded his superiors that Canadian troops were best suited, even though the raid was very different in scale and complexity than the small, limited coastal raids in which he hoped his troops could obtain some experience. He viewed the raid as risky, but not out of line with the still maturing Allied ideas on amphibious operations.

The disastrous results of the raid illustrated that Canadian and Allied planners underestimated the difficulties of an amphibious assault, and of a withdrawal from the beaches while under fire.

When the full import of the failure at Dieppe became evident, Crerar was among the first to press that the lessons of the raid be examined and applied. Whether they were learned only from this raid remains a point of contention. In the end, Dieppe did nothing to alter his perception that Canadians should take the same risks as their allies.

Dieppe did change the civil-military dynamic. King was already skeptical about these types of commitments and fearful that the military had too much autonomy when it came to employing Canadian troops. He was certain that few Canadians had any interest in being part of what he deemed was an "Empire War." He believed they would rather attack Germany directly.

King was not seeking to influence Allied strategy; consultation — and photo ops — were enough. But his views on how Canadian troops should be used evolved. By 1943, the prime minister was prepared to defer to British views on the best use of the army. The rifts over how to use Canada's army were evident with the senior leadership as well. By the end of 1942, Crerar was pushing for the deployment of Canadian formations to the Italian theatre, against the wishes of his superior and mentor General Andrew McNaughton, but with the growing support of Canadian politicians.

Still, he had to be careful. As the Normandy invasion loomed in 1944, Crerar's colleagues expressed concern that the British might lose confidence in the Canadian military leadership's judgment if it appeared more "constitutionally minded than [its] political masters." And King, fearful of another Dieppe, sought assurances of success that no one could provide.

Crerar's influence waned as the war drew to a close. The political crisis over conscription in the fall of 1944 revealed that King had grown too suspicious of the military to allow it any real voice in postwar defence policy. Crerar feared the country would lapse into its traditional malaise with regards to defence preparations and spending on the military. He promoted education, and introduced civics courses to his army. He advocated peacetime conscription to pursue this goal after the war, but after 1945 the appetite for views like Crerar's was limited.

Today, as Canada's military finds itself fighting abroad, political decision-makers are again confronted with complex questions of how best to protect and pursue the country's interests, and regarding the role of the armed forces in that pursuit. The past can provide perspective on these questions, but we need to understand the past in all its complexity.

Canada has a military record of which we can be proud, but it did not come without sacrifice and debate. Harry Crerar knew the importance of defining national interests before sending Canadians into conflicts.

Paul Dickson is a strategic analyst with the Centre for Operational Research and Analysis. His most recent work is *A Thoroughly Canadian General: A Biography of General H.D.G. Crerar*, published by the University of Toronto Press. He is currently co-editing with Mike Bechthold and Andrew Godefroy a collection of essays entitled *Dieppe: A Reassessment*.

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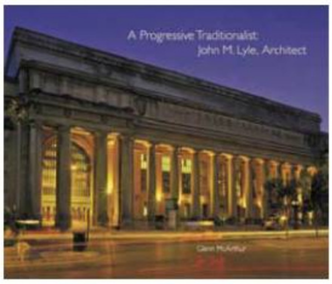
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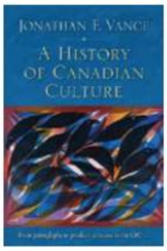
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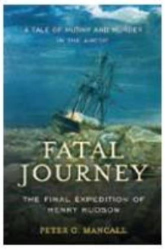
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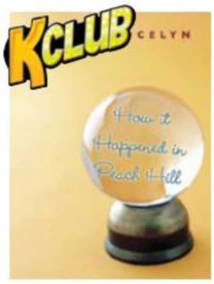
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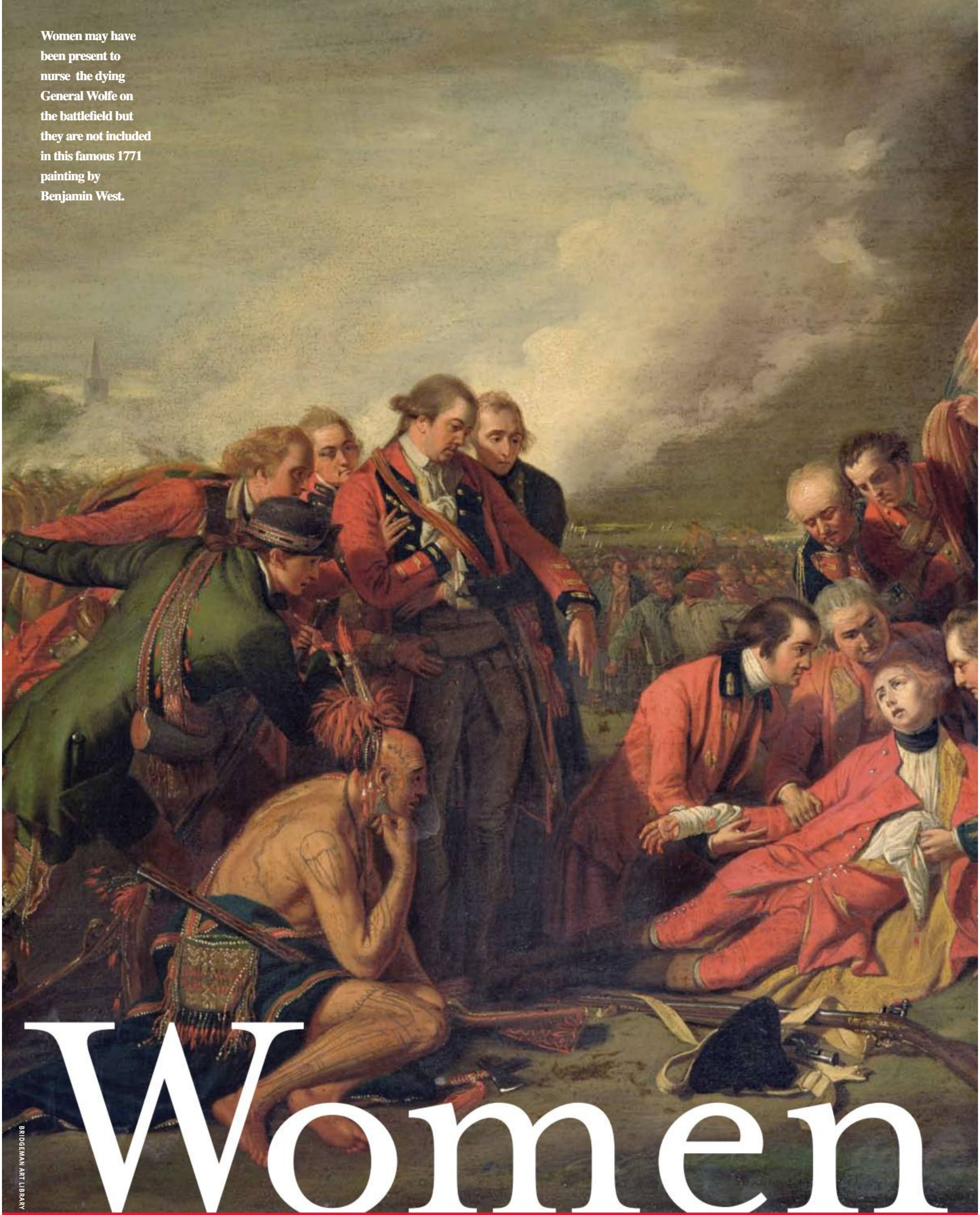

Women may have been present to nurse the dying General Wolfe on the battlefield but they are not included in this famous 1771 painting by Benjamin West.

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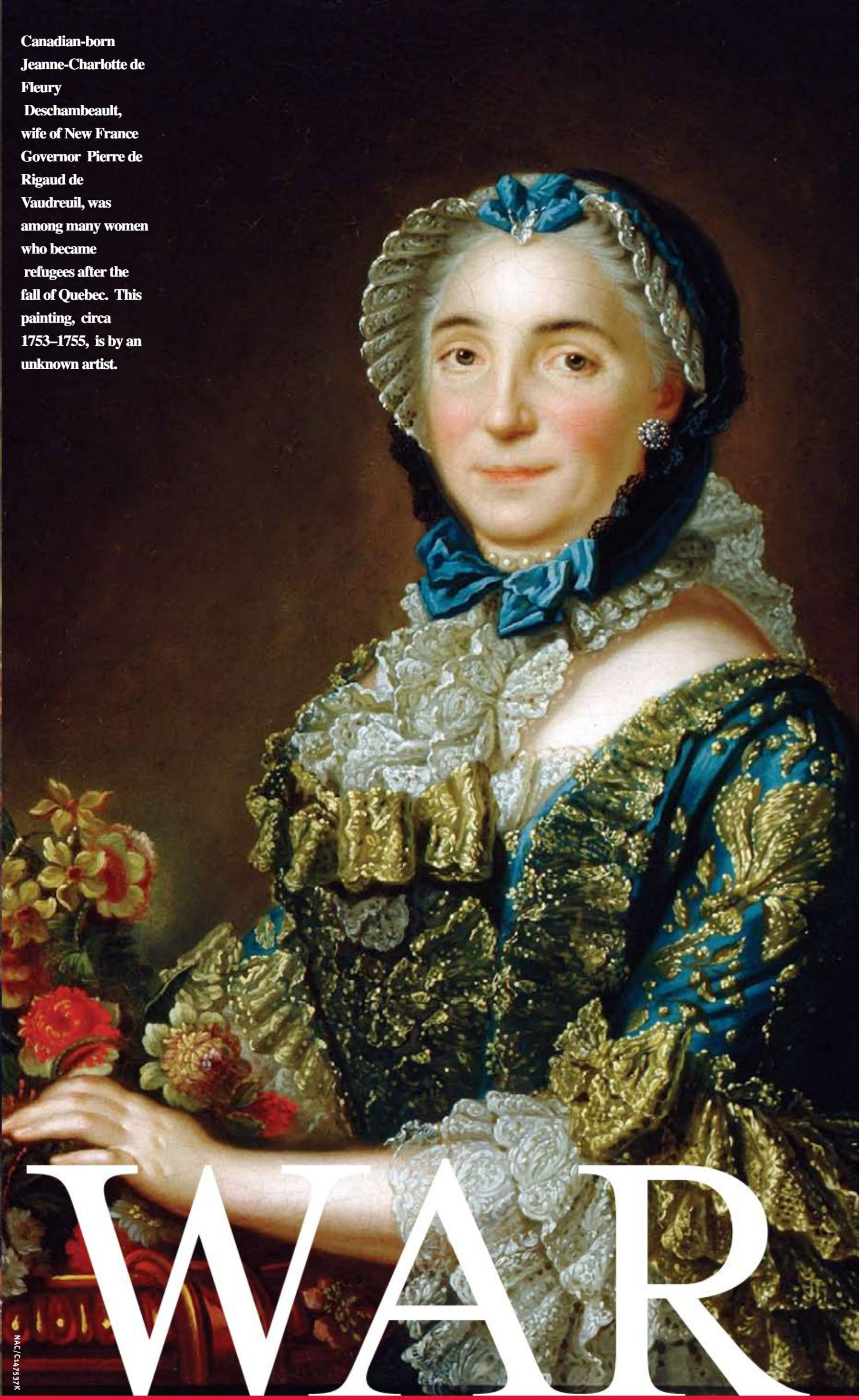
Women

The Battle of the Plains of Abraham was hardly an all-male event



Canadian-born Jeanne-Charlotte de Fleury Deschambeault, wife of New France Governor Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, was among many women who became refugees after the fall of Quebec. This painting, circa 1753–1755, is by an unknown artist.

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of WAR

— thousands of women played key roles. by D. Peter MacLeod

When most people think of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, they picture a confrontation between two generals, Louis-Joseph de Montcalm and James Wolfe. This may be dramatic, but it's also incomplete.

Behind the generals stood thousands of anonymous soldiers and warriors, and behind them further thousands of Amerindian, British, and Canadian women. Whether as nurses, teamsters, refugees, harvesters, cooks, bakers, or combatants, these women played essential roles in a campaign that shaped the future of Canada and the world.

Nursing the wounded

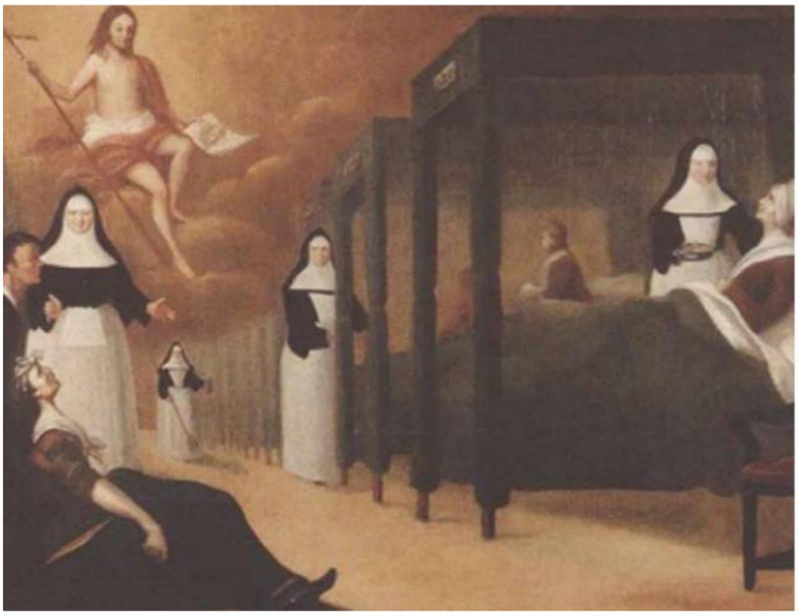
Of all the women who took part in the 1759 campaign, only one recorded events in her own words. Marie-Joseph Legardeur de Repentigny, Soeur de la Visitation, was one of the Augustinian nuns who managed Quebec's Hôpital Général. After the end of hostilities, she wrote a report that contains a series of striking vignettes of her community's activities during the Seven Years' War.

On September 13, 1759, both French and British soldiers were fortunate that this community and its hospital stood ready to help to care for the wounded. "We saw this slaughter from our windows," wrote la Visitation. "It was then that charity made us forget ... the risks we ran within sight of the enemy. Surrounded by hundreds of the dead and dying ... many of whom were our close relatives ... we had to set aside our sorrow and find room for them."

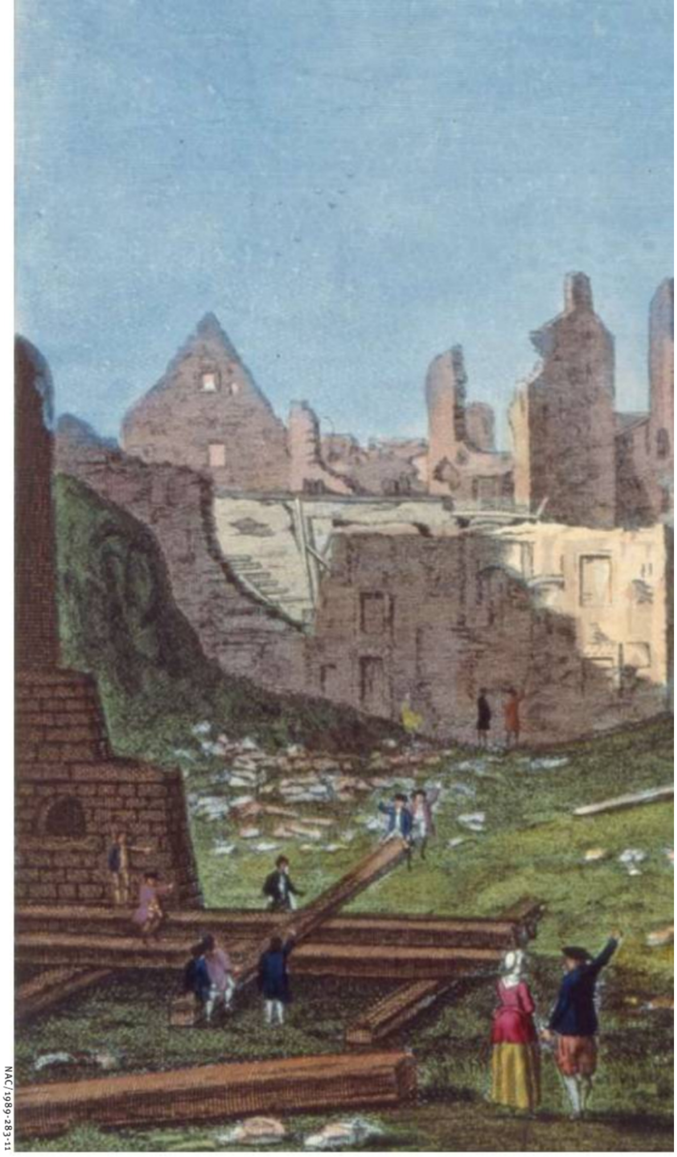
The nuns did more than just provide accommodation. Military and civilian surgeons extracted bullets and amputated limbs, but the nursing staff provided post-operative care. "The surrender of Quebec," she continued, "only increased our work. The British generals came to our hospital to assure us of their protection and at the same time made us responsible for their sick and wounded."

In so doing, the British acknowledged the possibility that their opponents' health care system might be superior to their own.

Nuns in an 18th-century Canadian hospital. Artist unknown.



MUSÉE DES HOSPITALIÈRES DE L'HOTEL DIEU DE MONTREAL



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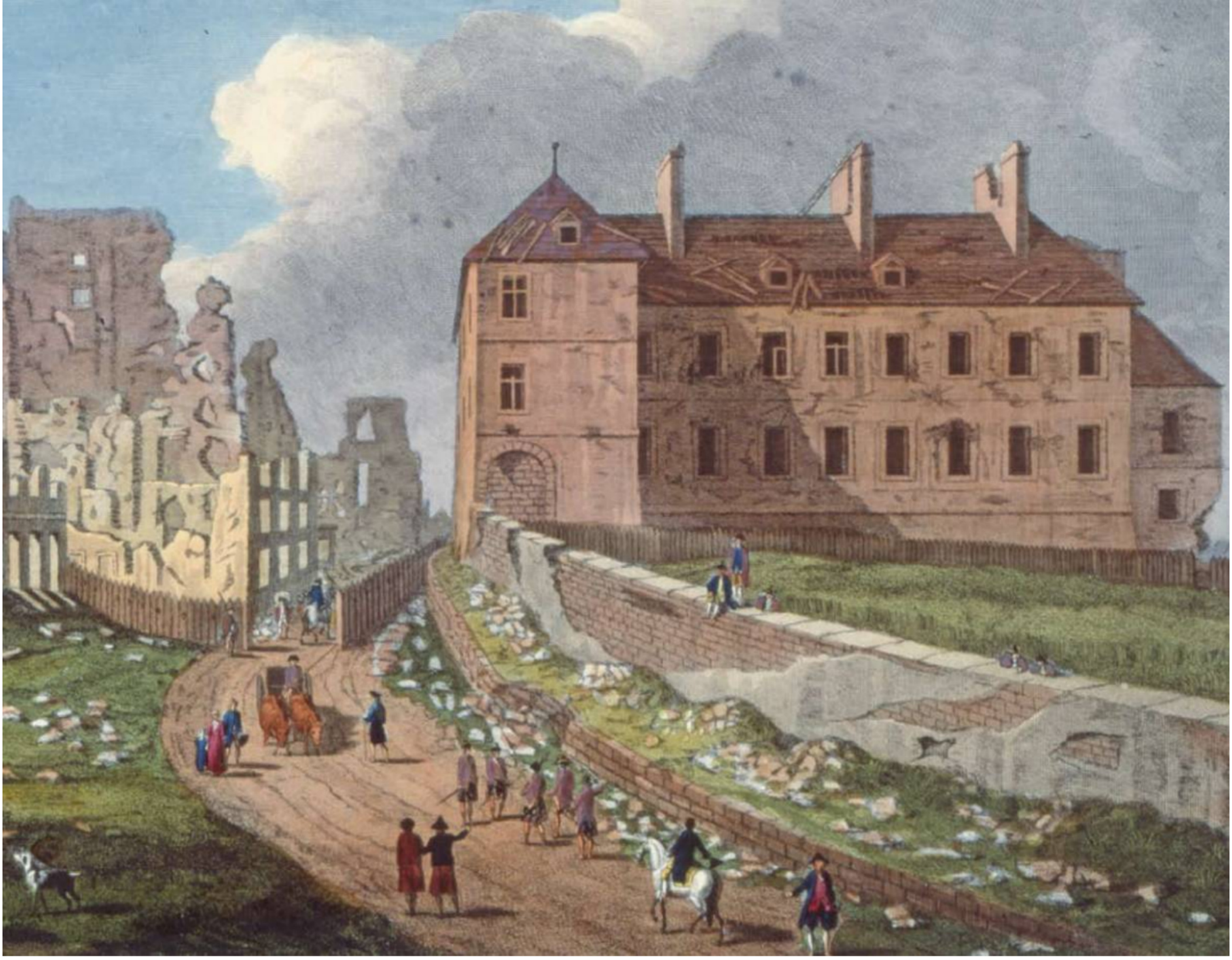
"I hope," wrote Brigadier George Townshend, Wolfe's successor, "that the attention of these ladies will be better for them [the wounded] than those of our sailors."

This proved true. John Knox, a British officer stationed at the hospital, observed that the casualties, "were indeed rendered inexpressibly happy; every patient has his bed with curtains allotted to him, and a nurse to attend him ... the beds are ranged in galleries on each side, with a sufficient space, between each, for a person to pass through; these galleries are scraped and swept every morning, and afterwards sprinkled with vinegar, so that a stranger is not sensible of any unsavoury scent whatsoever; in summer, the windows are generally open, and the patients are allowed a kind of fan."

Healing under fire

La Visitation's British counterpart was Eleanor Job, whose skill as a nurse and courage in the field made her a popular hero among Wolfe's troops. Decades later, Job merited an obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1823, our sole source of information on her life and work. It includes a brief description of Job's appearance — "her features were



remarkably fine and prominent, of the Roman order" — and mentions that she died at age 105.

Married to a gunner of the Royal Artillery, Job came to Canada as one of over 500 women who accompanied Wolfe's army. Women attached to European armies performed a variety of support roles, summed up by Charlotte Brown, another British nurse, in 1755. "All this day the nurses busy baking bread and boiling beef and washing."

Job, who served as the "principal nurse" for the British field hospital in 1759, quickly made her mark. "Her intrepidity and humanity were equally proverbial with the army...she had been often known to rush forward at the cannon's mouth, on the field of battle, to assist in the dressing of the wounded soldiers," her obituary says. Wolfe's troops called her "Good Mother Job."

The only woman known to have been on the Plains of Abraham battlefield, Job "was particularly conspicuous in her heroic exertions to relieve the wounded." After the battle, she travelled out to the fleet to embalm the body of James Wolfe before it was shipped to London for burial.

Job was exceptionally dedicated. But not all nurses were. Many British nurses served under duress. "If any woman," commanded Wolfe, "refuses to serve as nurse in the hospital, or leaves it ... she shall be struck off the provision roll."

Helping refugees

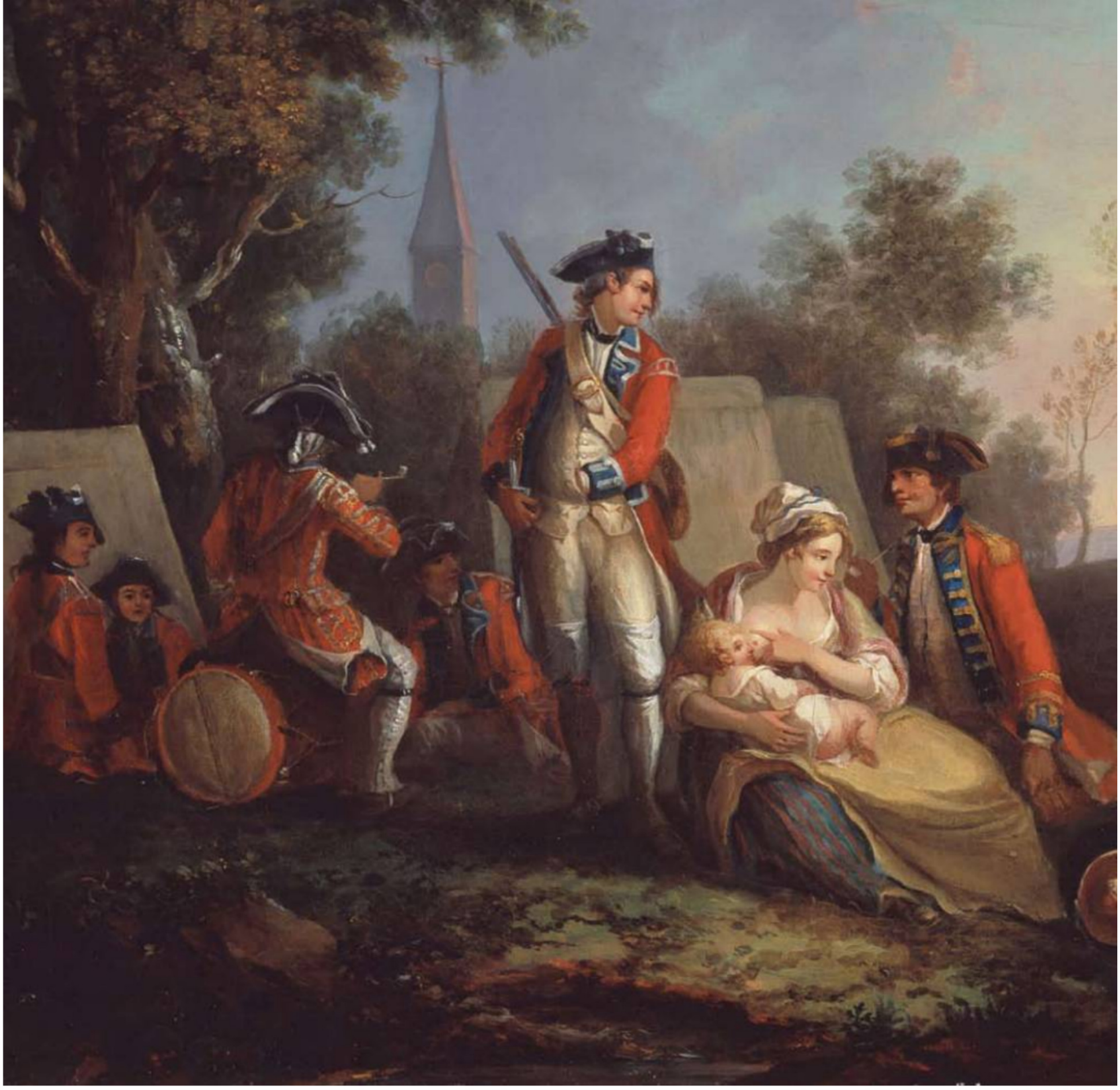
While nurses — willing or not — cared for the wounded, many Canadian women experienced the war as refugees.

James Wolfe had come to Canada determined to make the Quebec area either a British possession or a wasteland.

"If," he wrote, "we find that Quebec is not likely to fall into our hands, I propose to set the Town on fire with Shells, to destroy the Harvest, Houses, & Cattle ... & to leave famine and desolation behind me." As French resistance continued through the summer, Wolfe began to do just that.

"Equipped," wrote la Visitation, "with all the artillery invented in hell for the destruction of humanity," Wolfe's gunners opened fire on the city on the evening of July 12. Jean-Félix Récher, Quebec's parish priest, watched as "the English bombardment ... kept the whole city in terror, particularly women with their children, many of whom were near the citadel. Tears, laments, and prayers were continual among them; they went by platoons to say their rosaries, etc."

This 1761 painting by Richard Short depicts relaxed British soldiers enjoying time with their families amidst the ruins of Quebec. Wives frequently accompanied their soldier husbands on campaigns in that era.



It was not unusual for women and children to accompany the British army in the field, as depicted in this heavily romanticized painting from the Seven Years War. The artist of this 1760 painting is unknown.

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

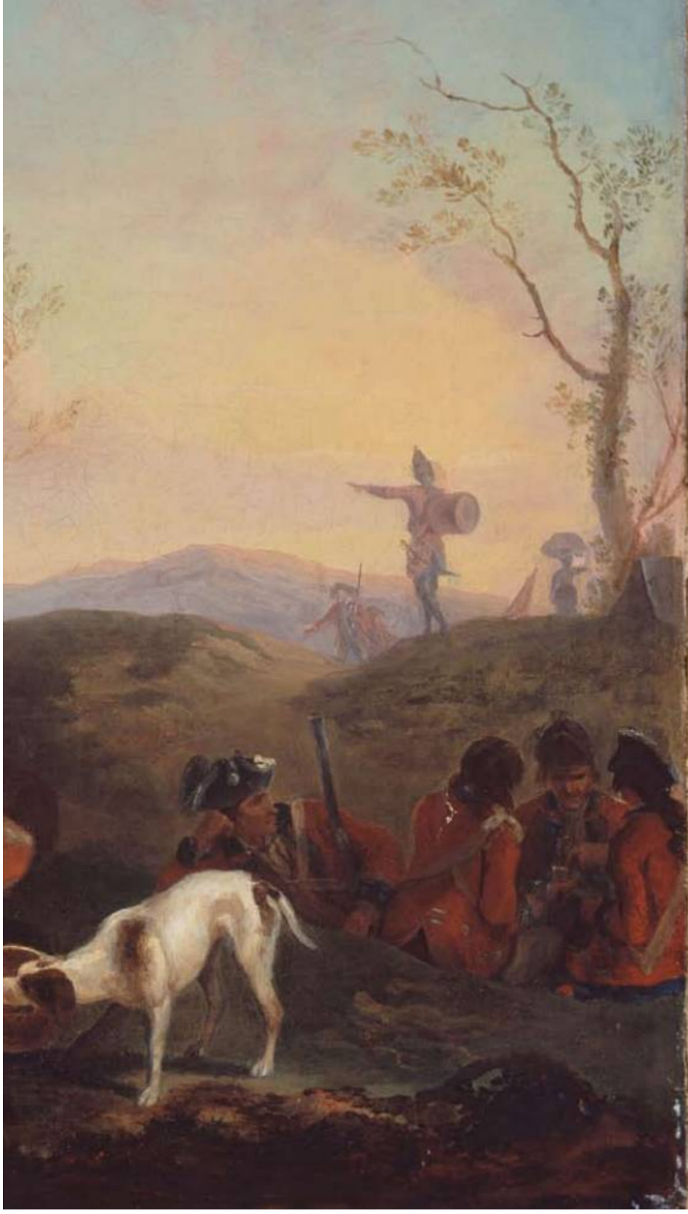
Within days, the civil population, women and men alike, had fled the city, leaving it virtually deserted. The Hôpital Général became a refugee centre for city residents who lacked the financial resources to escape to Montreal or friends and relatives in the countryside willing to take them in.

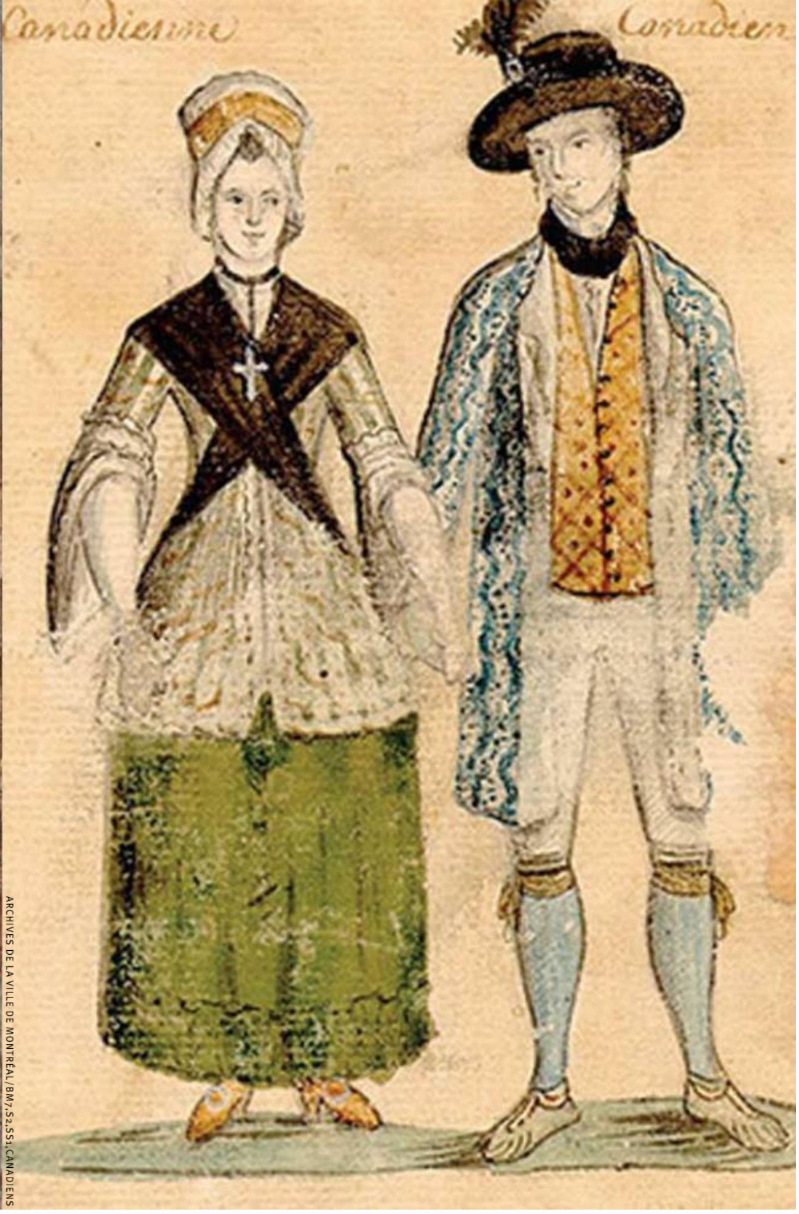
For those outside the hospital, twenty-two year-old Marie-Thèrese Adhémar de Lantagnac, Soeur Sainte-Elizabeth, took charge of a mobile aid station that roved among Quebec's refugees distributing food and treating the sick and injured. This work was not without its hazards. Sainte-Elizabeth was passing out rations to her patients one day when a French soldier held a sword to her throat and tore the food out of her hands. Her refusal to allow incidents like these to prevent her from caring for victims of the siege became an edifying story of devotion to duty in the face of danger for future Canadian nuns.

Rural refugees, however, were beyond the help of the most courageous caregivers. When Wolfe sent troops to "to destroy the Harvest, Houses, & Cattle" of Canadian farming communities, the women who lived there fled into the forest to save themselves and their children.

Madame Bernier of L'Islet, nine months pregnant, was one of these women. Running for her life, Bernier went into labour. The baby, born on a bed of leaves, survived to be nicknamed "La Feuille" (Leaf) and passed on the name to his descendants.

Bernier and others like her endured a very rough summer in the bush. French naval officer Jérome de Foligné saw some of them after Quebec surrendered. "Our poor women came out from the depths of the woods, pulling their little children, [who were] eaten by flies, without proper clothing, [and] crying from hunger, which must have stabbed their poor mothers like a dagger ... [these mothers] didn't know if they still had husbands or where to find them and what help they could give their poor children."





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This sketch by an unknown artist, circa 1750, depicts a French Canadian woman and her husband.

Feeding the troops

Other Canadian women, many of whom never set eyes on the citadel of Quebec in 1759, supported the war effort by transporting and harvesting provisions.

Quebec's defenders depended upon the regular arrival of food from Bastican, a post about a hundred kilometres upriver. These supplies came down the St. Lawrence by bateaux until the last weeks of July when British warships above the city made this too dangerous. Sending provisions by land would mean using hundreds of teamsters. With most Canadian men stationed on the frontiers, the colonial government turned to Canada's women. Assisted by children and elderly men, Canadian women conducted a convoy of 271 horse-drawn carts to Quebec. They arrived on August 1, carrying enough food to keep the army in the field for another two weeks. On August 18, the women brought in a second shipment. These convoys made it possible for the French army to continue to defend Quebec until the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

Most of the provisions they carried were imports from France that lasted until partway through August. After that, the French counted on the harvest of the Montreal area, the best farmland in the colony, to fill the gap. The 1759 wheat crop was, in fact, superb, but the farmers were far away. François-Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, governor of Montreal, lamented that "I see nothing in my government [district] but women, children, and elderly men."

Although this comment betrays a certain lack of confidence in the ability of Canada's women to rise to the occasion, Rigaud was too pragmatic to allow his prejudices to stand in the way of Canada's defence. He organized committees of local notables to, wrote one observer, "take, in cooperation with the priests, the most effective measures to bring in all the harvest; they must divide all of the women, girls, and children so that they all work alongside one another, while the men bind up the sheaves and cart them away."

Summoned to duty, Montreal's women surged into the fields and gathered in the crops. Following the successful harvest, Rigaud proclaimed that "at the very moment when we were about to run out [of provisions], we have found … a resource to sustain us, as well as allowing us to thwart the designs of our enemies."

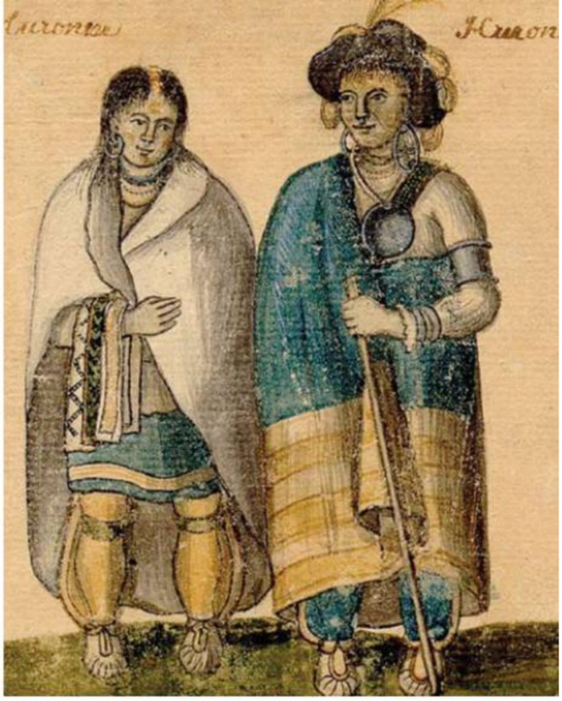
Only a fraction of these provisions reached Quebec before the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. But they helped to feed the troops that guarded Canada during the winter and returned to Quebec in the spring of 1760 to win the Battle of St. Foy.

Joining the fight

Even after the surrender of Quebec, when Canada was temporarily divided into a British enclave around the city and a French zone centred on Montreal, many Canadians in British-occupied territory continued to resist. While avoiding direct confrontations that might have led to reprisals, they passed on information to the French, supported French agents and patrols, and stole cannonballs off the ramparts of Quebec — but only cannonballs that could be fired by French artillery.

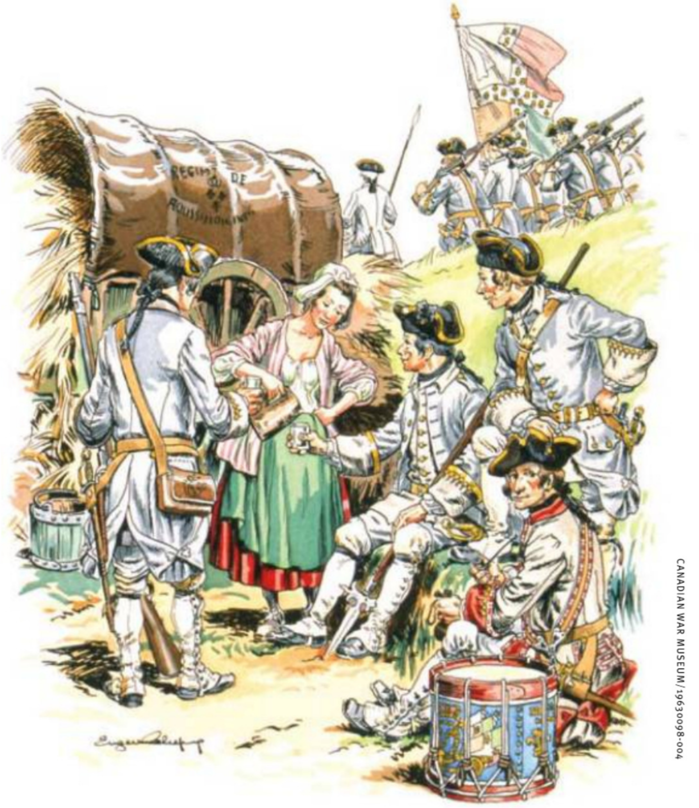
Marie de la Visitation and the staff of the Hôpital Général played their part in the resistance by providing desperately needed reinforcements to the French army. When French casualties in the hospital recovered, she wrote, "we … provided them with food and clothing to enable them" to escape to French-controlled territory.

Finally, a few women engaged in combat and won a small but notable victory. Like Eleanor Job, Amerindian women frequently accompanied the men of their families when they went off to war. Unlike Job and her fellow nurses, at least some of the Amerindian women were armed and prepared to fight if the necessity arose.



ARCHIVES DE LA VILLE DE MONTRÉAL/BM7,S2,SS1,HURONS

Right: Amerindian women travelled with their warrior husbands. This 1750 illustration, *Huronne et Huron*, is by an unknown artist.



CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM/19630098-004

Below: A woman provides refreshment to Royal Roussilon Régiment, circa 1755–1763. Artist Eugene Leliepvre.

This occurred on August 21, 1759, when a party of Amerindian women found themselves at Point-aux-Trembles, west of Quebec, just as a British amphibious force attacked. Canada's governor-general described what happened next: "Twenty boats landed … at dawn … They were resisted only by several Native women, who fired on them and put them to flight."

Many women who took part in the 1759 campaign influenced events at a personal level. Nurses and mothers who saved the lives of wounded soldiers in hospitals or children in the bush stayed out of sight of history. But they performed roles that, to the individuals and families involved, were far more important than those of generals like Montcalm and Wolfe.

Others directly shaped the course of the campaign. If soldiers are going to fight, they need to eat. The Canadian women who transported and harvested the provisions that fed the French army at Quebec receive at best a half sentence in most histories of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. But without them the defence of Canada would have been impossible.

D. Peter MacLeod is the pre-Confederation historian at the Canadian War Museum, where he curated the permanent exhibit *The Seven Years War*. His latest book is *Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham*.

Et Cetera

L' Hôpital-général de Québec, 1692–1764 by Micheline D'Allaire. Fides, Montreal, 1971.

Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham by D. Peter MacLeod. Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, 2008.

"Venus and Mars: Women and the British-American Army in the Seven Years' War," by Peter Way, in *Britain and America Go to War: The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1745–1815*, edited by Julie Flavell and Stephen Conway. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2004.

Taking the battle to England

There will be a re-enactment of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in September — but not on this continent.

A plan to stage a mock Battle of the Plains of Abraham at the actual site in Quebec City became a no-go back in February after some sovereigntists threatened to disrupt the event, which was to commemorate the 250th anniversary of this key battle for control of North America. The sovereigntists view it as a humiliating defeat.

Their influence has not extended to the town of Westerham, England, however. When people there found out about the cancellation, they invited organizers to fire their muskets in Westerham — which happens to be the birthplace of General James Wolfe, the British victor of the battle.

"Just because something can't happen in one place due to political reasons doesn't mean it can't go ahead elsewhere," said Horst Dresler, president of the Quebec Historical Corps, who is travelling to Westerham as a participant in the re-enactment.

The Westerham Wolfe Weekend is billed as a chance to "come and meet the re-enactors of 'New France Old England' as they recreate life on campaign in Quebec in 1759." It's also an opportunity for Westerham, a charming little town of 5,000 in the district of Kent, to drum up tourism revenue in hard economic times.

"The weekend is part of a wider series of events locally marking the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Quebec," says John Rawlinson, the National Trust custodian for Quebec House, the home Wolfe grew up in. The events began in the spring and end on September 13 with a memorial service.

Dresler is happy to go but disappointed at how things turned out in Quebec.

"No one mentions the loss of tourism," he says. "We would have had about 200,000 tourists coming up through the American Bus Association. Most of those people were going to be up there all week. I estimate they lost about $30 million in tourism revenue."

About 2,000 re-enactors from around the world had been expected in Quebec. They included enthusiasts from Canada, the U.S., Germany, France, England, and the Czech Republic. The Czech group included re-enactors representing native warriors. About fifty aboriginal re-enactors from North America were also to be involved.

LOUISE BILODEAU

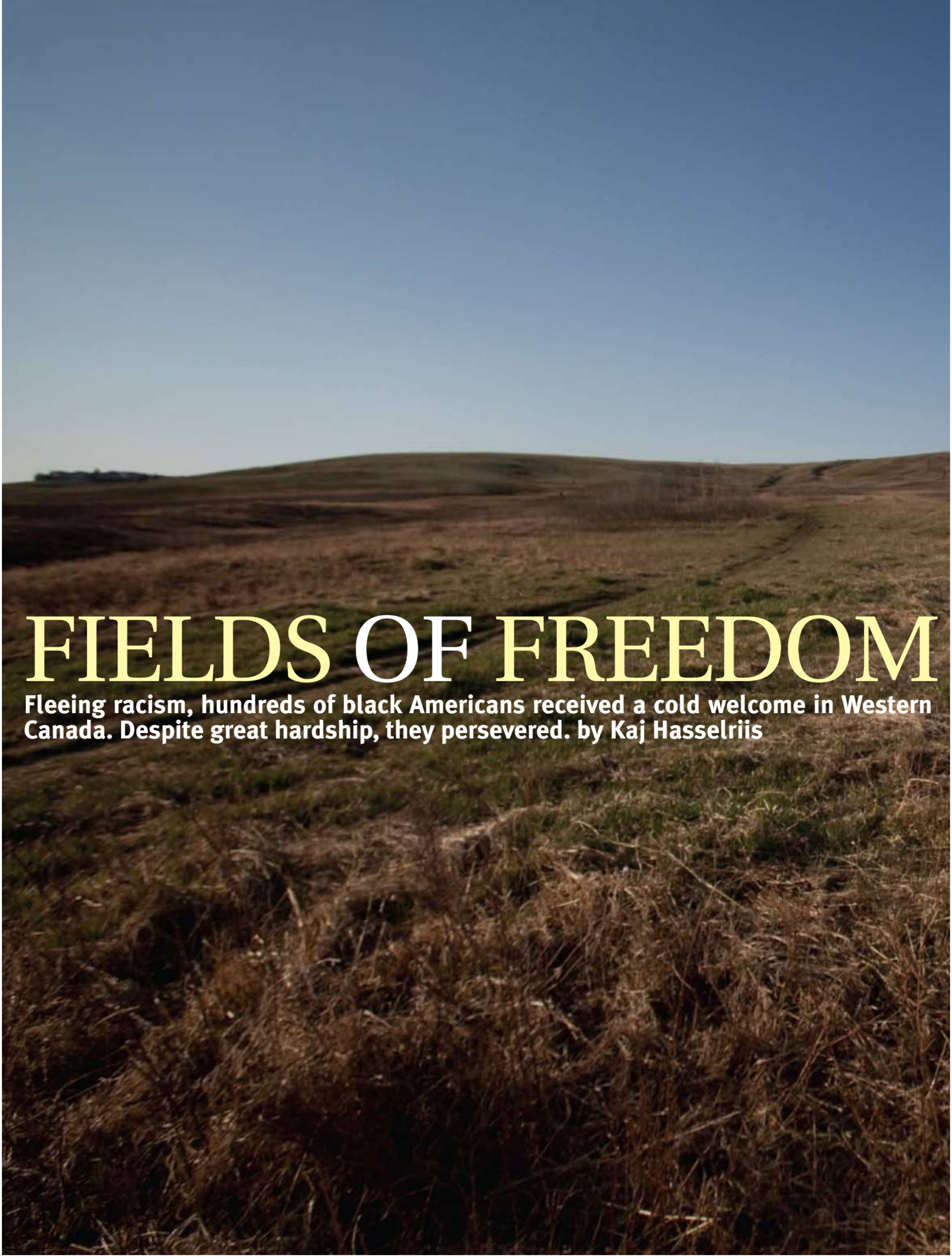
When the National Battlefields Commission cancelled the event, Dresler received no less than sixteen invitations from other communities in North America inviting them to stage the event in their city or town.

"We wrote a letter back to each one saying thank you, but no thank you, you don't know what it will take to put on something like that," said Dresler.

The Westerham event will be on a smaller scale — about two hundred re-enactors.

So far, no one has objected. **— Nelle Oosterom**

Above: Modern-day 78th Highlanders in costume. Below: Re-enactors representing French soldiers — La Compagnie franche de la Marine (left) and Canonier-Bombardier.



FIELDS OF FREEDOM

Fleeing racism, hundreds of black Americans received a cold welcome in Western Canada. Despite great hardship, they persevered. by Kaj Hasselriis

DAN BANNISTER

Peggy Brown's grandparents were among the hundreds of oppressed black Americans who settled in rural Alberta and Saskatchewan a century ago.

Willis Bowen, with grandkids Shirely Annette and Dennis Lee Bowen, in 1956.

COURTESY OF VERN BOWEN

Willis Bowen and Jeanie Thigten, a black couple descended from slaves, wanted nothing more than a safe place to farm and to start a family. Born in Alabama in 1875, the couple fled to escape racism — first to Texas, then to Oklahoma, and then, finally, to Western Canada.

They were part of a small wave of American blacks who crossed the border in the early part of the twentieth century. Some settled in small, isolated farming settlements on the Prairies, hoping to keep a low profile. But their presence did not go unnoticed by those who wished to keep Canada white.

Canada was not in the Bowen family's plans when they arrived in Oklahoma sometime after 1903. Many blacks had already settled there. It was Indian territory — land set aside for displaced native Americans.

With a growing family of five children, Willis and Jeanie were preparing to stay for life. But two things happened that would once again shake up their world and compel them to move on.

One was that in 1907 Oklahoma became a state and immediately wrote segregation into law. Interracial marriage became a felony. Interracial schools were banned. Over time, almost every aspect of life was ordered segregated — rail stations, restaurants, stores, neighbourhoods, hospitals, even pay telephones and cemeteries.

Even so, the Bowens might have resigned themselves to the situation, believing there was no other place to go. But it happened that a twist of fate made them change their minds.

Willis's older brother Charlie got into a fight with a white man and killed him. As Willis's grandson Vern Bowen remembers the story, Charlie knew what the authorities would do if he stayed. "They probably would have hung him," says Vern. So, he bolted.

"Willis came to Canada in search of his brother a few years after this incident," says Vern, who is sixty-eight and lives in Calgary. "He was never able to find him ... [but] while in Canada, and because of his acceptance in this country, he decided this is where he wanted to raise his family."

So it was that in 1909 Willis and Jeanie bundled up the kids, packed up their furniture and livestock, including two teams of horses, and, along with five other black families and two single men, boarded a train.

The group reached the border crossing at Bellingham, Washington, on the West Coast, where their journey came to an abrupt halt. Canadian border officials were unsure of what to make of this collection of black families and their livestock. They made everyone undergo a medical exam and they put all of the animals in quarantine. Long hours of waiting turned into days. Tensions grew. The families feared the worst. They waited and prayed.

It came as a great relief when they at last received the news that all was in order. Immigration officers welcomed them to Canada and stamped them through. Willis and Jeanie were ecstatic. But there was still one fear they couldn't shake — racism. Would white Canadians accept them? Would they live without harassment, segregation, racial violence? Would their children have the opportunities that they never had?

The Bowens initially moved to Vancouver, where Willis found work hauling gravel with his team of horses. But life here was not easy for them, and when their infant daughter died of a bacterial infection common to coastal areas at that time, they decided to move on once more. In 1912 they joined friends who had settled in northern Alberta.

Travelling by train, the family, which now included eight children, made a stop in Edmonton. They were tired and hungry, but the uncomfortable, frightened stares of the locals prompted the family to quickly move on.

For the next couple of weeks, the Bowens slowly made their way two hundred kilometres north, cutting through dense bush until they reached their new home — Pine Creek, which later became known as Amber Valley.

Between 1908 and 1911, about 1,300 African-Americans settled in isolated areas across Saskatchewan and Alberta. They tended to settle well away from the southern half of the Prairies because that's where most of the white immigrants were.

Amber Valley was the largest and most northerly of the black settlements in Canada. The story of how the Bowens and other black families came to settle there is remembered today by their grandchildren.

"My dad said, when they arrived the trees were so tall you couldn't even see the sun. There was nothing except heavy, heavy forest," says seventy-six-year-old Peggy Brown, whose father Boadie was Willis and Jeanie's son.

The Bowens cleared land, built a log cabin, and braved winters colder than any they could have imagined. They also endured multiple crop failures. Yet they raised twelve children and, along with other black families, built a robust community. A school went up in 1913; a year later a church was built.

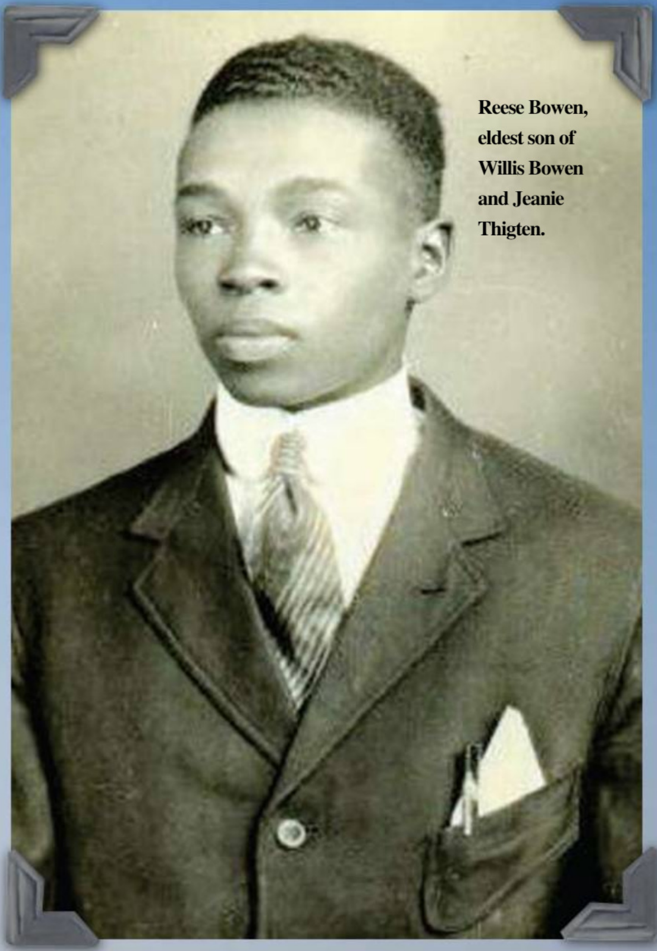
And every summer starting in 1915, Amber Valley hosted a party that attracted families from all over northern Alberta — black and white. The event lasted three days and featured wrestling, pole-climbing, and horse-pulling. "Everybody always looked forward to the picnic," said Peggy, "and the dance afterwards."

Their isolation meant they encountered less discrimination than they had known. But they couldn't avoid it altogether.

"I can remember my dad saying it was more difficult for a black farmer to get a loan," said Vern, whose father Obadiah became the town's preacher.

Amber Valley seemed destined to grow and thrive. After all, there were plenty of other persecuted blacks looking for a progressive place to live. But the flow of black immigration trickled down, then came to a complete halt. Canada, it turned out, didn't really want them.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, one million mostly white immigrants rushed to Western Canada. Many came from Eastern Europe, and their strange languages, customs, and clothing did not sit well with established residents of British origin. A growing sentiment arose to keep Canada white and British. When blacks



Reese Bowen, eldest son of Willis Bowen and Jeanie Thigten.

COURTESY OF VERN BOWEN

started trickling in from the United States and passed through cities like Edmonton, people noticed and started speaking out.

Newspapers carried racist editorials. Among the most vocal was the *Edmonton Bulletin*, a newspaper published by Frank Oliver, the federal minister of the interior. "Increased Negro immigration could serve potentially as an incitement to racial violence as yet unknown in Canada," warned the Edmonton-based cabinet minister.

The Edmonton Board of Trade circulated a petition in 1911 demanding that the government "prevent any further immigration of Negroes into Western Canada." More than three thousand people signed. Oliver responded with an order-in-council to halt black immigration completely.

It never had to be used. Instead, Oliver quietly initiated other methods of achieving the same result. He called Canada's nearest immigration official, based in Kansas City, and had him determine the racial background of people writing to apply for immigration status. The official got the information from postmasters in towns where the lettters had originated. The official was directed not to send immigration information to people who were black.

Oliver also persuaded the Canadian Pacific Railway, which had its own immigration service in the United States, to direct its personnel not to co-operate with blacks proposing to move north. The railroad also denied blacks the organized tours of Western Canada that it freely offered to prospective white settlers.

And, in perhaps his most underhanded move, Oliver hired a black physician from Chicago to cross the border, make an "independent" assessment of Canada and discourage other African-Americans from coming. Dr. G.W. Miller went down to Oklahoma and warned fellow blacks to stay away from the Great White North. He said the land was bad, the water was unsafe, and the winter never stopped — not even in August.

The Canadian government continued attracting white Americans to settle the West, but from then on most blacks stayed home. The next wave of African-American immigration to Canada didn't come until the 1960s.

Peggy Brown and family: son Brett (centre), granddaughters Chantelle, 7, and Katelyn, 10, and daughter and son-in-law Roxanne and Peter Poelstra.

DAN BANNISTER

The Edmonton Trade Board circulated a petition in 1911 demanding that the government "prevent any further immigration of Negroes."

If Willis Bowen and Jeanie Thigten knew about the circumstances that kept other black Oklahomans from joining them in Amber Valley, they didn't let on. "Our parents and grandparents didn't dwell on it," said Peggy. "We were sheltered from it. We never even knew what questions to ask. It never crossed our minds."

Oblivious to the racism that prevented their community from growing, Peggy and Vern recall having an idyllic, carefree childhood.

The people of Amber Valley and other black communities in the West certainly proved themselves as farmers. In 1922, a Canadian government agricultural study acknowledged that blacks were as good at farming as whites. Researchers complimented Amber Valley in particular on its farms and said the community's future was "very encouraging."

Still, farm life was tough — "absolute toil," said Peggy. After harvesting their fields all summer, the men of Amber Valley had to get jobs in Edmonton and Calgary every winter. Willis Bowen helped build the Banff Springs Hotel. Jeanie and the other women stayed back to raise kids, knit clothes, tend livestock, cut firewood, and cook meals.

Farming did not seem to hold a promising future, so when Vern and Peggy graduated from high school in the late 1950s, they moved to the big city, along with most of their peers in Amber Valley. There they enjoyed the kind of success their grandparents could not have imagined: Vern became a transportation manager for the Pfizer pharmaceutical company; Peggy became a justice of the peace; another grandchild, Oliver Bowen, became a civic official, managing the design and construction of Calgary's light rail transit system.

The elders of Amber Valley eventually followed their children to cities such as Calgary and Edmonton — Willis lived to the age of one hundred. As for Amber Valley, today it barely registers on the map.

"It looks nothing like it did when I was growing up," said Peggy, noting that most of its original log houses have been torn down. "Big machinery went through and bulldozed whole sections in just a few hours." Most of the area's lakes and creeks have dried up and the land has been almost entirely sold off to white farmers.

Yet the legacy of Willis and Jeanie lives on in their grandchildren's voices. Although neither Vern nor Peggy were born in the Deep South and they haven't lived in a black community in over fifty years, both still speak with the trace of a southern accent.

As for Peggy's children and grandchildren, they rarely ask about the community or what their relatives went through to build it. "They simply cannot relate to driving a team of horses and riding horses bareback," she says. "Sometimes they think it's hilarious — and so do I."

Still, she adds, "I wish my kids could have had as happy a life growing up in Calgary as I had growing up in that dirt-poor town."

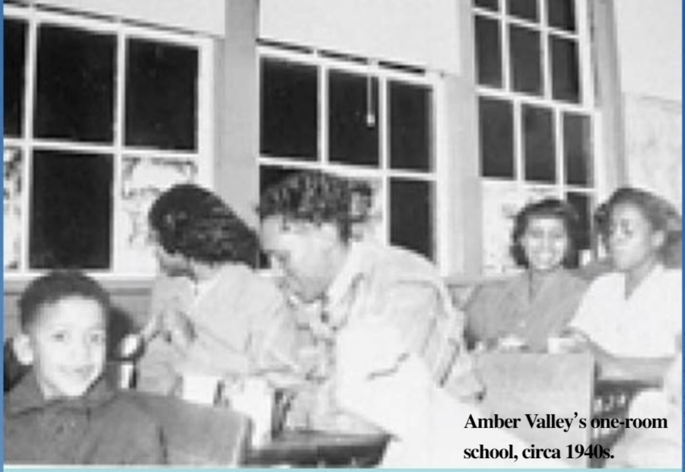
Kaj Hasselriis is a writer and broadcaster in Winnipeg.

Et Cetera

The Settlement of Oklahoma Blacks in Western Canada by Michael B. Payne. Report available online at: albertasource.ca/blackpioneers/history/articles/index.html.

Prairie Dreams: Blacks in Western Canada, a 2000 CBC educational video.

For more on black immigration to the Prairies, visit TheBeaver.ca



Amber Valley's one-room school, circa 1940s.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Bringing back the old school

There are many projects underway to remember Amber Valley and commemorate its significance as the most northerly black community in the world. Perhaps the most ambitious is happening at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec.

There, curator Rhonda Hinther is co-ordinating efforts to rebuild Amber Valley's one-room schoolhouse as a permanent exhibit in the museum. Since 2005, Hinther has made ten trips to Alberta to gather information and artifacts. Vern Bowen donated a Crock-Pot-style water fountain that was used at the school, while Peggy Brown provided a collection of textbooks and pencil cases, as well as old school work. Hinther was even able to acquire the old Toles School sign.

Once completed, Hinther says the rebuilt schoolhouse will be a near-identical replica of the old one, right down to the direction of the floorboards and the colour of the doorknobs. She's even hoping to reconstruct the school's outhouse — complete with a foul smell.

Originally, Hinther's assignment was to find a typical prairie schoolhouse and recreate it. When she learned about Amber Valley, she liked the twist.

"It's a distinct story but it represents a lot of commonalities in terms of the settler perspective," she says. "There's also a rich base of evidence I've been able to mine. It's taken me quite far afield, in very unusual directions."

Hinther's exhibit should be on display by 2010. But there are many other Amber Valley projects underway. Parks Canada is creating a plaque about black communities and a couple of documentarians are shooting interviews with former Amber Valley residents.

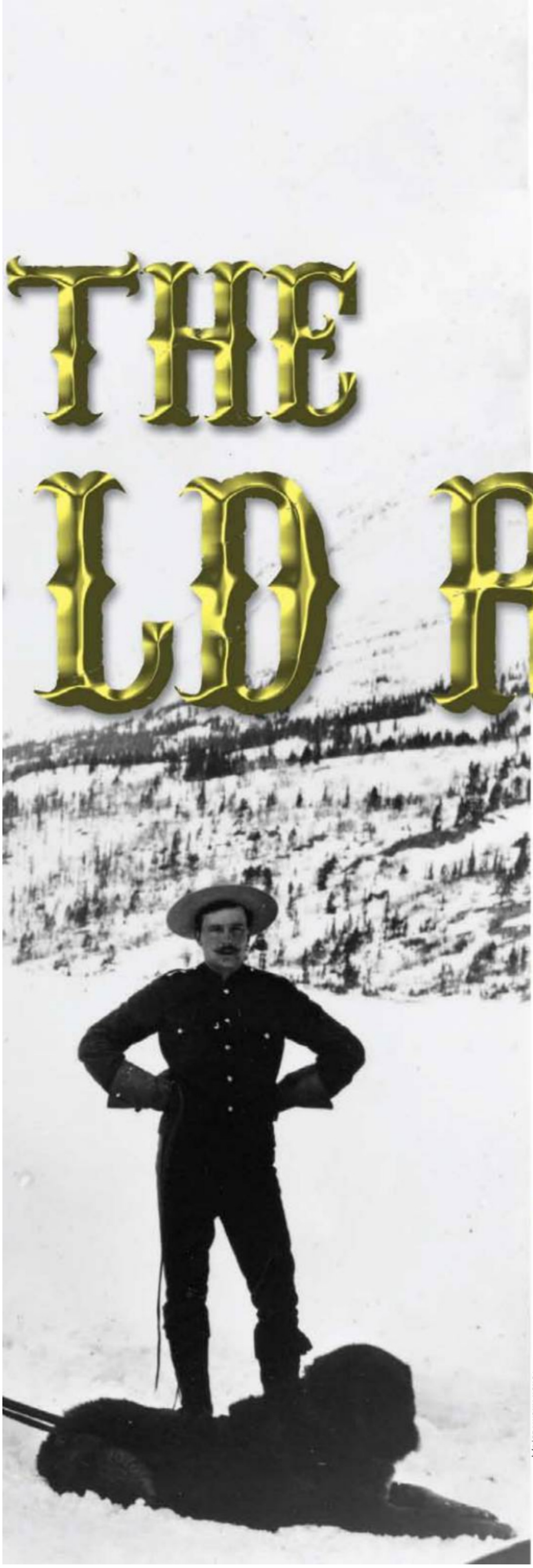
Meanwhile, a group of women calling themselves the East Athabasca History Books Society is compiling stories of northern Alberta communities, including Amber Valley. One of the people working on the book is Myrna Bowen. She helped organize a hundredth anniversary picnic at Amber Valley this summer. Former residents are being invited from all over North America.

Finally, Myrna's cousins, Norma Jean and Shirley Bowen, are raising money to turn the oldest house left standing in Amber Valley into a historical interpretive centre. Called Obadiah Place, it's the home their father built for their family in 1938. The Alberta government has given the Bowen sisters a $25,000 grant for the project and a historical architect is drawing up plans for the home's restoration. There's already a huge set of artifacts to display inside. "It's all stored away, just waiting to go into the house," says Norma Jean. **— K.H.**

BLACK DOGS OF GO

North West Mounted Police patrol with dog team in 1899.

THE
LD RUSH



YUKON ARCHIVES/174

With sled dogs worth their weight in gold, the NWMP launched a bold, but badly flawed plan to bring black Labs to the Yukon. *by Ann Chandler*

It was a hilarious sight: pairs of headstrong, eager canines bounding down a long ice-covered dock in Skagway, Alaska, each with a uniformed Mountie in tow trying desperately to stay afoot. It was November of 1898. Excited by the smell of land after six weeks on board the SS *Cutch*, the dogs were frantic to end their arduous journey.

"We sailed down the dock like water skiers," Constable C.P. Constantine recalled later. "Some [officers] sat down and nearly burnt a hole in their britches. Others hung on to the railing long enough to get tangled up with the man and dogs behind them."

As Constantine noted in his memoirs, it all would have been laughable had it not ended so tragically.

These were no ordinary sled dogs. With their glistening dark coats and large paws, anyone could see that these were friendly, water-loving Labrador dogs from Canada's East Coast. What on earth were they doing here in the land of the hardy sled dog?

The unlikely arrival of this boatload of black Labs had everything to do with the Yukon gold rush. An exploding population of gold seekers brought increasing lawlessness, which prompted a huge jump in

A Yukon gold miner helps his dogs as they struggle to pull his heavily laden sled during the gold rush. Short-haired dogs were ill-suited for the extreme conditions of the North.

YUKON ARCHIVES/2324

‘We have lost over forty dogs — congestion of the lungs and liver carrying them off like rotten sheep.’

the number of North West Mounted Police officers stationed in the Yukon — from nineteen officers in 1895 to 285 four years later.

With supplies to bring in, mail to deliver, and laws to enforce, everyone was in need of a dog team. Demand for sled dogs far exceeded supply — the animals were practically worth their weight in gold. A reliable, skilled dog could cost as much as $300, which was a lot even by inflated gold rush standards.

“Dogs are beyond my means. So I must play ‘dog’ myself,” Yukon miner Lynn Smith wrote in a letter home. To see a man pulling a sled with the lead rope around his own neck was not uncommon.

The Yukon Mounties — who, in addition to all their other duties, had recently taken responsibility for delivering mail on the thousand-kilometre run between Skagway and Dawson, Yukon — were in desperate need of dogs. When their concerns reached headquarters in Ottawa, NWMP comptroller Frederick White had an idea. Why not acquire some strong black dogs from Labrador? They were used to cold weather and could pull a sled.

White sought the help of an agent with the Marine and Fisheries Department in Quebec City, who put him on to an experienced dog driver and trainer, Ignace Hébert, Jr., who was familiar with the Labrador coast. Hébert agreed, for the sum of two dollars a day plus board and expenses, to acquire a large number of dogs from Labrador and accompany them on the long voyage to the Yukon.

After several failed attempts to charter trading schooners — their captains objected to a cargo of dogs — Hébert was able to hire a former smuggling vessel, the *Maggie H*. On September 1, 1898, Hébert boarded the *Maggie H* and set sail along the Labrador coast, buying dogs with cash and bartered goods. He returned to Quebec City seven weeks later with 142 dogs. Many were suffering from seasickness and diarrhea. Eight had been swept overboard during a violent storm.

After a week-long stopover in Quebec City, the dogs and their handler boarded two Canadian Pacific Railway boxcars and travelled to Ottawa, where much fuss was made over them. A number of dogs were inspected by Frederick White and several cabinet ministers, who proudly voiced their approval of the NWMP’s new canine acquisitions.

Back on board the CPR, the dogs continued their gruelling journey by rail to the West Coast. NWMP veterinary surgeon Inspector John F. Burnett, along with a group of officers, met the tired dogs when they arrived in Vancouver on November 13. He declared them to be dirty, but in fairly good health. The dogs were housed in a waterfront warehouse for four days before beginning their final voyage to the Yukon by steamer.

The SS *Cutch* steamed out of Vancouver harbour November 17 and headed for Skagway, but the journey was rough. Again the dogs suffered seasickness. Sixteen dogs died on the trip, several from eating rodent poison and the remainder from lung and liver congestion.

Constable Constantine, who accompanied the dogs on board, recounted their arrival in Skagway in his 1958 memoir, entitled *I Was a Mountie*:

“There we were, wearing top boots, our moccasins in the hold, and the mile-long deck covered with ice. Our instructions were each to take two dogs on a chain and deliver them to a corral in town. The dogs were big, powerful brutes, they had been confined six weeks [on the boat], and this was their first sniff of the wilds beyond.”

After sliding off the dock, they landed in a hopeless tangle in a corral deep with snow.

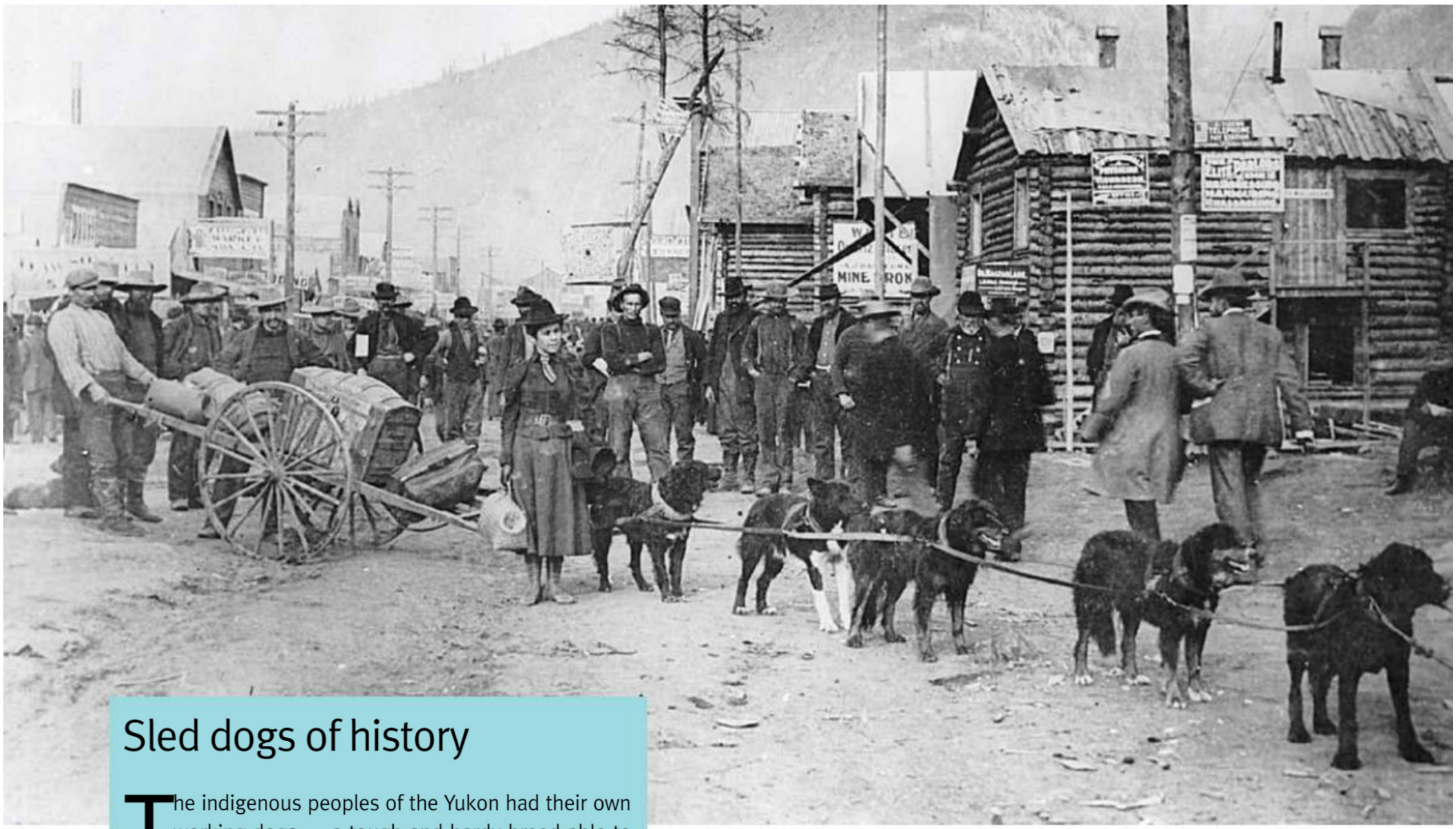
“It looked as if an avalanche had fallen on a pack of snarling dogs and half-buried Mounties,” wrote Constantine.

“As a climax, and this I remember well, a Salvation Army lass happened along and in the name of God begged us not to swear. Quite a few of the dogs got away and were never recovered.”

Their troubles quickly mounted. For instance, many of the dogs developed pneumonia.

“Since our arrival we have lost over forty dogs — congestion of the lungs and liver carrying them off like rotten sheep, the weather being particularly favourable for the development of both complaints, cold and rain," wrote Inspector Burnett, the veterinarian.

Hopeful that a drier climate and higher altitude might help the dogs' health, Burnett sent sixty of the remaining dogs on to the Yukon tent city of Bennett, an exhausting trip of about sixty kilometres involving a steep climb over mountainous terrain. Burnett reported to his superiors on November 27, 1898, that only forty-three of the sixty dogs had reached Bennett.


The "dog express" in Dawson in 1898. Dogs like these pulled carts in summer.

MCCORD ARCHIVES/MP-1979.111.39

Sled dogs of history

The indigenous peoples of the Yukon had their own working dogs — a tough and hardy breed able to endure hunger and cold, and to travel with great speed over vast distances of ice and snow. Raised to carry packs in the summer and to pull sleds in the winter, the small "siwash" dog, as it was known locally, was notorious for its often hostile temperament.

Another commonly used sled dog in the North was a forerunner of today's Malamute. These dogs are believed to have gotten their name from an Inuit people situated at the mouth of the Yukon River.

During the gold rush, the Yukon dog population was supplemented by "outside" dogs, such as the NWMP's black Labs, as well as dogs imported by miners — St. Bernards, mastiffs, and other large breeds shipped north from Seattle. But some of the old-timers found these dogs to be weak and soft, as well as more expensive to feed and maintain.

Those left behind in Skagway under the concerned care and watchful eyes of Burnett and Hébert continued to fall ill. Later in December, Burnett's official report stated: "Dogs still dying, lost over one hundred." By January 1899, only twenty-one dogs of the original 142 remained.

White's original assumptions about the suitability of Labrador dogs proved to be erroneous. The strong, even-tempered dogs — close relatives to the Newfoundland breed and descendants of the St. John's Water Dog — were more used to pulling fishing nets out of the water than heavily laden sleds across snow and ice. The general consensus was that the long journey, crowded conditions, and severe temperatures had taken their toll.

Though the harrowing journey to the North proved too taxing for the Labradors and they were no match for the hardy sled dog of the Yukon, a handful of the toughest did survive and formed several reliable working teams. Perhaps a few of their descendants can still be found playing in the Yukon snow.

Ann Chandler is a Vancouver-based freelance writer, editor, and book author.

Et Cetera

I Was a Mountie by C.P. Constantine. Exposition Press, New York, 1958.

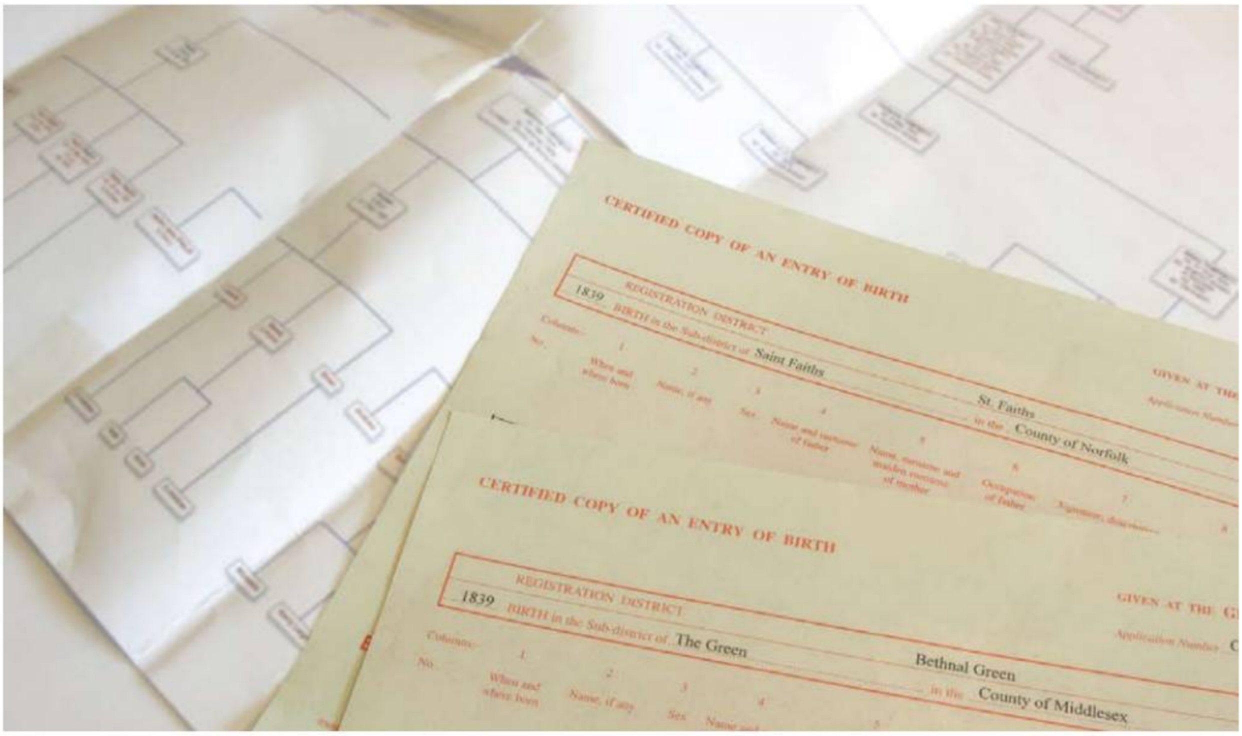
A Dog-Puncher on the Yukon by Arthur Treadwell Walden. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, New York, 1928.

The Postal History of Yukon Territory Canada by Robert G. Woodall. Quarterman Publications, Massachusetts, 1976.

Roots

For the record

Nothing beats original records when it comes to researching your roots, says Fraser Dunford.


CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH
REGISTRATION DISTRICT
1839 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Saint Faiths
St. Faiths
in the County of Norfolk
CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH
REGISTRATION DISTRICT
1839 BIRTH in the Sub-district of The Green
Bethnal Green
in the County of Middlesex

One of the remarkable features of beginning genealogists is their startling reliance on data on the Web.

Only a small percentage of all genealogical records are on the Web today, and I doubt that any of us will live to see a quarter of those records available online.

However, those that are on the Web are very useful. You can find the Canadian censuses and some vital statistics (births, marriages, and deaths), most of which are available free if you know where to look. You will eventually be able to see land records and tombstone inscriptions. I doubt you will ever see complete sets of court records, school records, or municipal records. As for the enormous collections of miscellaneous records, you are unlikely ever to see even basic finding aids for them online.

The size and scope of these miscellaneous records was brought home to me recently. The Ontario Genealogical Society has just begun a massive project to help Ontario heritage organizations digitize and place online their paper records. I have been talking with heritage organizations. In response to "whatcha got?" the reply is usually, "oh, not much."

On examination, that not much turns out to be dozens of boxes, or a hundred shelf feet, or, in the case of one organization whose name may not be recognized by any of you, an entire floor of a fair-sized office building. Typically, the best indexing you can hope for is the most rudimentary finding aid, and usually you can see that only if you go to the repository — in other words, you have to know where the records are before you can learn what the records are.

So what does a beginning genealogist do? You do the first things first — talk to family members (treating their stories with some skepticism) and look at censuses and vital statistics online. You take them as guidance, but do not believe a word of, any online family trees.

But that is merely the beginning. So far you have not done any genealogy. You have, however, gained essential knowledge: some names, some dates, and — most importantly — some locations. Now you can start to think of original records.

Here is where membership in a genealogical society that serves the location of your ancestors becomes so valuable. If, like me, you have ancestors from a number of different places, then you will end up belonging to a number of different societies or branches. To begin, pick one ancestor and join one society or branch.

ISTOCK

Remember, however, that volunteers operate most genealogical societies, and so the character of different societies will be quite different. Your experience with one should not inform your expectations of your experience with another.

All societies know the area they service, what records exist, and which are the most useful. Many have records that are available only to their members. All allow their members to post queries. Most have volunteers who will provide some guidance in response to specific questions. A few even have consulting services, where they will do some research for you.

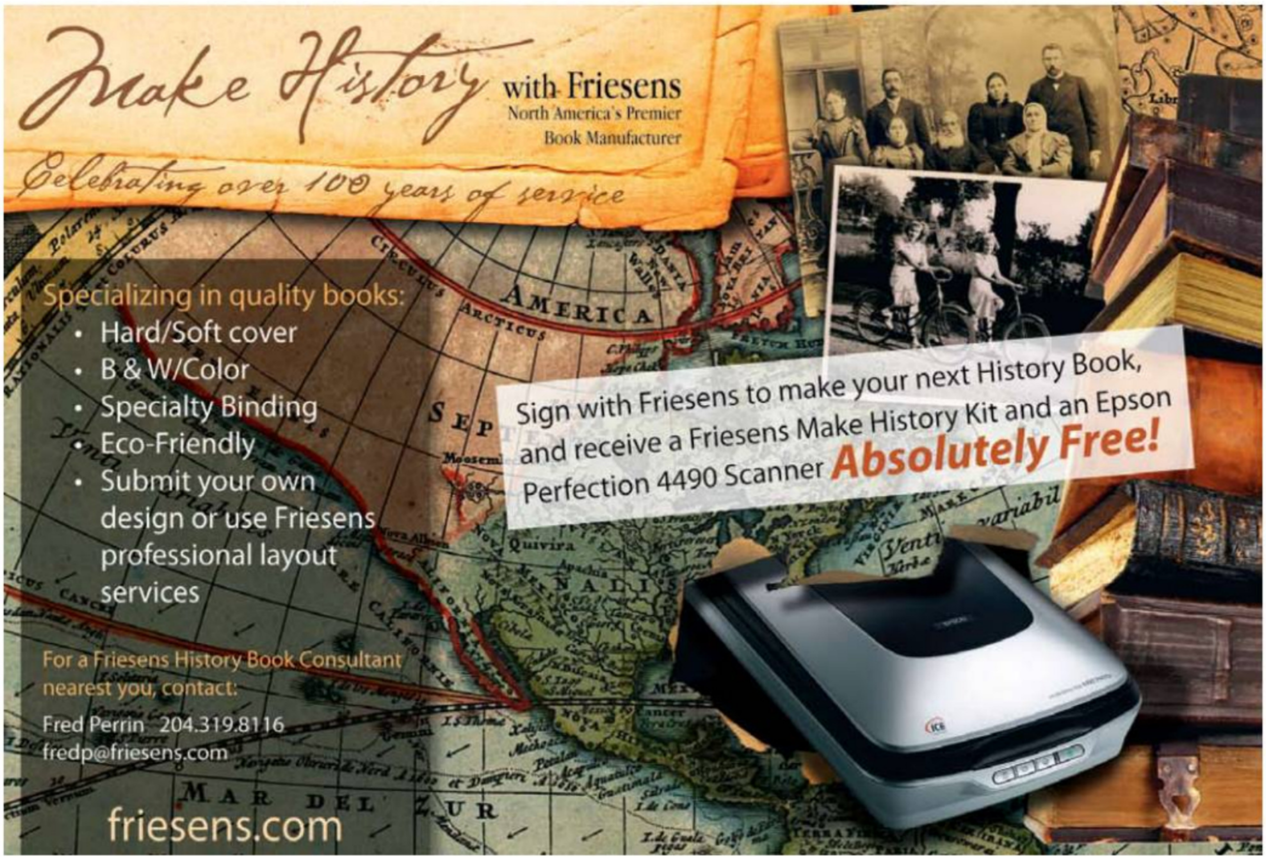
If you are able to attend a meeting of a society, you will find many people eager to give you advice. Genealogists are like that! Many societies start their meetings by asking newcomers to identify themselves and to list the families in which they are interested. Do not be surprised to meet a distant cousin!

For a beginning genealogist, the local society is the only way into local records. If you do much work in one area, in a year's time you will be one of the experts on those records and will be able to provide guidance to other beginning genealogists.

There is another group of original records that will confuse a beginning genealogist — records that are centrally located but are extraordinarily difficult to understand. One example is Ontario land records (although I am sure that other jurisdictions have something equally as confusing). Ontario land was allocated in so many different ways under so many different systems that it takes a book just to describe the system. Another example is court records, which require some understanding of the legal system and which are not indexed. A beginner is wise to stay away from these records at first and to approach them later, guidebook in hand, when you know that you need the information — and, most importantly, when you know what information you need from those records.

Despite the difficulties of working with them, original documents can offer great rewards. There is something very satisfying about handling and understanding documents from the time of your ancestors. Even more wonderful is finding something like an ancestor's signature. One of the great highlights of my genealogical life was when I found a receipt from 1832 that identified when one of my great-great-grandfathers arrived in Quebec City from England. It was part of the commutation of his army pension into cash and an Ontario farm.

Dr. Fraser Dunford is a professional engineer and a former university academic and administrator. In his second career, he is a professional genealogist and the executive director of the Ontario Genealogical Society. He is the author of several books on genealogy.



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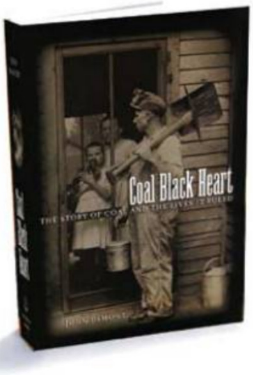

MINING DARK PASTS

Coal Black Heart:
The Story of Coal and the Lives it Ruled
by John DeMont
Doubleday Canada, Toronto, 2009
352 pp., illus., $34.95 hardcover

"Dark" pasts, something rather new in the field of heritage tourism, usually involve visiting sites where evils were once inflicted on large populations. Think of Nelson Mandela's former jail cell on Robben Island in South Africa, or the memorialization of the terrible Pol Pot atrocities in Cambodia. Such pasts can also include the practices of industries during days gone by, when working conditions were not as well regulated as today and earnings were insufficient for honourable livings to be had by honest working people. Sometimes a symbolic visit to these dark sites can be taken through memoir or fiction.

One such metaphorical journey is John DeMont's *Coal Black Heart*, a hybrid sort of history of coal mining in Cape Breton, primarily in the twentieth century. DeMont's epiphany apparently came when *Maclean's* magazine sent him to cover the Westray disaster in the spring of 1992. There, twenty-six men were lost in Nova Scotia's last major mining tragedy, and DeMont encountered the results of unshackled capitalism: executives developing and mismanaging a coal mine as if it were in some underdeveloped part of the world, where its managers had been used to operating. Setting off to uncover the background to that story, he undertook a decade-long odyssey to find out how coal mining came to Nova Scotia and to explore his own roots within that story.

DeMont has written widely for magazines and is well-known for his group biography of the Irving family as well as a feel-good book on Nova Scotia. He is descended from families that worked Cape Breton's coal for much of the century, though it is obvious from the tone of this book that he never directly experienced life in a coal community. We end up with a somewhat vicarious account of the trials and tribulations of coal miners. While DeMont's book draws heavily on the scholarship of the past

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few decades, it is interwoven with his own family's history of involvement with coal mining.

He comes to this story as a committed and skilled writer, rather than as a scholar. His gloss on the scholarly research is sometimes choppy and poorly integrated, and his interweaving of family history sometimes seems forced, perhaps reflecting a compulsion to identify with the experiences of the coal miners he seems to idolize. He conducted some very effective interviews with retired miners and local notables, and these are used to good effect from time to time.

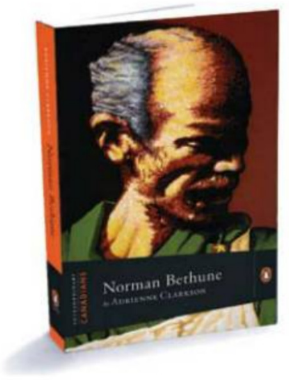
But in the end, DeMont's command of the hundred years of the rise and fall of the coal industry of Cape Breton is mostly that of someone who is an outsider to the heavy slogging of historical research. It shows more often than it should. Yet he never claims to be a historian. To his credit, DeMont summarizes the relevant scholarship effectively enough to contextualize and embellish his own story.

We end up with a heroic, hardscrabble sort of self-reflexive narrative, which essentializes the miners' experience as victims of unfettered capitalism, but without really expanding our understanding of their experiences. Miners are clearly the story's heroes, but we actually read very little about their intimate lives; and the book includes little of the work experience of his ancestors, something that might have helped push the narrative along.

The most direct "experience stories" come from scientists and engineers, along with the officials who directed much of the industry. DeMont's own forebears' migrations to Cape Breton at the turn of the twentieth century are well told, albeit somewhat imaginatively.

John DeMont has sketched out a popular account of the last hundred years of coal mine development. But it is a disjointed story, well written in parts, but seldom insightful. For the real story, interested readers would do well to look at the work of the scholars DeMont cites so often, particularly the award-winning biography of James B. McLachlan by David Frank, or works by Dan Samson or Don MacGillivray. Or, better still, readers might visit one of the half-dozen historic sites and museums dedicated to the industry across Nova Scotia.

Reviewed by **Del Muise**, who taught Atlantic Canadian History at Carleton University for the past forty years and is a native of New Waterford, in the heart of Cape Breton's coalfields.



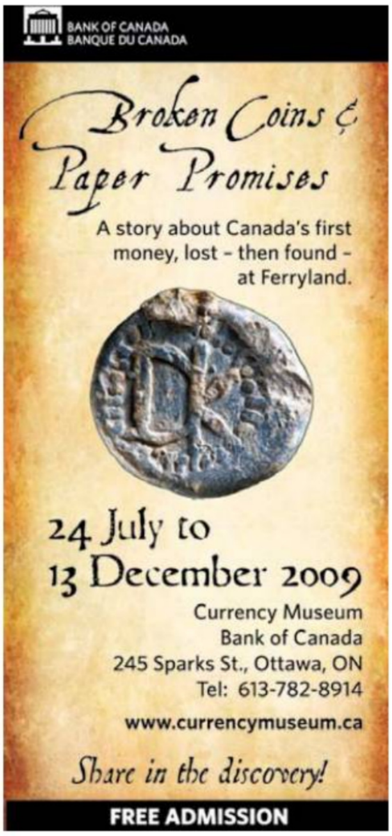
FIELD DOCTOR

Extraordinary Canadians:
Norman Bethune
by Adrienne Clarkson
Penguin Canada, Toronto, 2009
204 pp., $26 hardcover

What would motivate a man like Norman Bethune to leave a successful medical practice in Canada to work in war zones thousands of miles away under extremely difficult conditions, with inadequate supplies and accommodation? Why would he describe his final twenty months in China as the most significant and meaningful of his life? And why is he acclaimed the single most famous Canadian in the world? These questions make Bethune an ideal subject for the Extraordinary Canadians series, and Adrienne Clarkson's background and journalistic experience make her a fitting choice as author.

As the son of a Presbyterian minister, Bethune shared the church's concern for the poor. He worked with Frontier College teaching his fellow labourers to read and write at night. When the First World War broke out, he volunteered to serve as a stretcher-bearer. Later, working as a surgeon in Detroit, he did more than his share of looking after poor patients, and when he returned to Canada he championed the idea of a state-supported medical system long before it gained popularity.

Bethune was also tempted by fine objects. He liked expensive suits and spent lavishly on art. He married a wealthy woman after the war and spent six months spending her



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inheritance on luxurious travel and living in Europe. His life as a successful, well-paid surgeon should have afforded him much satisfaction, but something was missing.

Clarkson shows how Bethune eventually came to resolve these conflicting influences of materialism and compassion for others. In 1926 he developed a severe case of tuberculosis and entered a sanitarium, where a radical new procedure — pneumothorax, which artificially collapses a diseased lung — likely saved his life. The prolonged period of illness gave him time to reflect on what he really wanted to do. The other transforming event was the Depression, when many people could not afford proper medical treatment. Bethune visited the USSR and was impressed by the medical system and the efforts to spread state wealth among the people. In 1935 he joined the Communist Party.

Bethune now devoted his life even more completely to the service of others. He raised funds in Canada for the democratically elected Republican Party in Spain and set up a system of mobile blood transfusion units that would save many lives during the Spanish Civil War. The next year he was off to China to help the Eighth Route Army as it sought to repel a Japanese invasion. Clarkson quotes his assistant, Canadian nurse Jean Ewen, who described the historic meeting between Bethune and Mao Zedong in March 1938. A year and a half later, Bethune cut himself during an operation and died of blood poisoning.

During her research for the book, Clarkson went to China. She visited the Bethune Museum and the room where Bethune and Mao met, and she fell under the spell of the powerful propaganda Mao created around Bethune's efforts. Mao's eulogy, memorized by schoolchildren for decades and quoted in Clarkson's first chapter, helps to explain why the Chinese consider Bethune a national hero. Throughout the book she quotes at length from Bethune himself and from a number of other sources, including Hugh MacLennan's novel *Watch that Ends the Night*, whose protagonist closely resembles Bethune.

Bethune was a complex character and Clarkson is careful to bring out both his virtues and his flaws. Like Louis Riel, he is a Canadian whose life ended tragically and who has become a mythic figure in our history. Clarkson does an excellent job of documenting the tensions in Bethune's life and conveys her information with a journalist's eye for detail. Her book is a worthy addition to the Extraordinary Canadians series.

Reviewed by **Charles Hou**, a retired educator who served on the board of directors of Canada's National History Society for several years and is active in the British Columbia Historical Federation and the Vancouver Historical Society.

MORE BOOKS

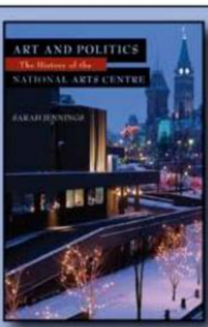
FIGHTING CANADIANS

The Fighting Canadians: Our Regimental History from New France to Afghanistan
by David J. Bercuson
HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., Toronto, 2008
400 pp., illus., $34.95 hardcover

There are some who consider Canada a "nation of peacekeepers." They look upon our martial neighbour to the south with disdain, relieved to know that Canada lacks the macho military tradition that so characterizes the United States.

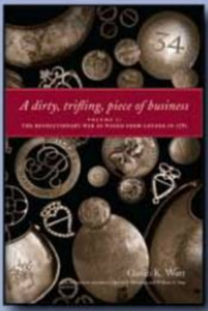
If you count yourself among this group, then *The Fighting Canadians*, by David J. Bercuson, is not for you.

Reading *The Fighting Canadians*, one realizes that Canada's history is just as bloody as any other nation's.



ART AND POLITICS
The History of the National Arts Centre
by Sarah Jennings
131 colour and b&w photos
$50.00 hardcover

The history of Canada's National Arts Centre in Ottawa and the story of the arts in Canada from 1960 to 2006. Written in a documentary style and enriched by the personal memories of those who participated in it



A DIRTY, TRIFLING PIECE OF BUSINESS
Volume 1: The Revolutionary War as Waged from Canada in 1781
by Gavin K. Watt
86 b&w illustrations, maps, and plans, appendices, notes, bibliography, index
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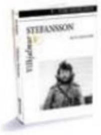
From the earliest conflicts between First Nations, to the black powder battles of the Seven Years War, to the trenches of Belgium and the steaming jungles of Hong Kong, Canadians have always forged fraternal bonds through bloodshed and sacrifice. And it is through these conflicts that Canadians formed a sense of nationhood.

Bercuson gives readers an overview of the many regiments that have served, and continue to serve, Canada. *The Fighting Canadians* is well-written and benefits from both strong narrative and the ample use of colourful quotes and anecdotes.

That said, it's likely that the book — due to its tight focus on regimental history — will appeal more to ardent military history buffs than to average folk looking for a more generic introduction to Canadian military history. **— M.R.**



Vilhjalmur Stefansson: Arctic Adventurer
by Tom Henighan
Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2009
216 pp., illus., $19.99 paperback

Vilhjalmur Stefansson is not a typical, straightforward biography. It starts off as a narrative of the controversial Canadian-born explorer's life, then moves into essay mode, ruminating on the mystery of the North and its place in popular culture. The book ends unusually, with the script of a play that presumably takes place in the afterlife — it imagines Stefansson interacting with some of the people who played key roles in his life.

It doesn't all work. But this short bio gets at some of the main things to know about Stefansson: he was undeniably brilliant and driven, letting nothing get in the way of his passion to explore the Arctic and its Inuit culture; he was also disliked by some of his contemporaries, who denounced him as a charlatan.

Definitely short on leadership qualities, his lack of attention to detail led to disaster when the Canadian Arctic Expedition ship *Karluk* was trapped in ice in 1913. Reports that Stefansson had discovered a lost race of "blond Eskimos" descended from Vikings damaged his credibility for a while, although recent archaeological finds on Baffin Island may yet prove his theory.

Others have written more extensive biographies of Stefansson, but Tom Henighan's book provides a quick, analytical introduction to this complex explorer. **— N.O.**

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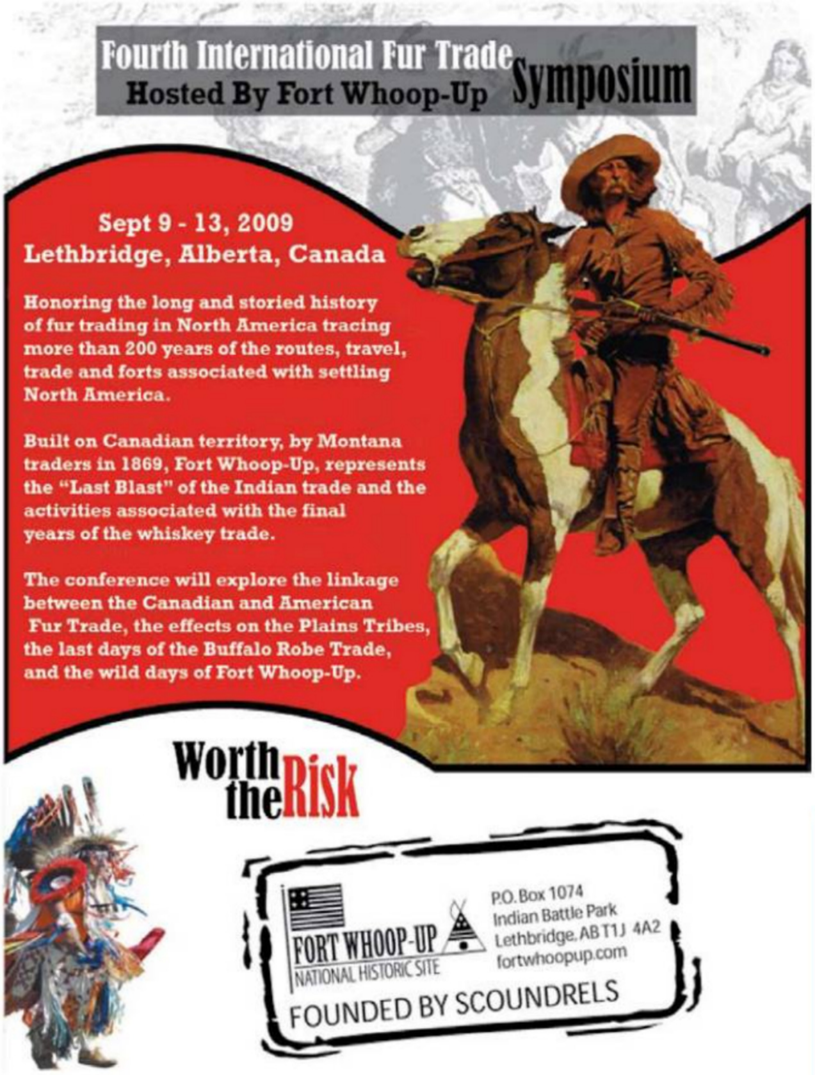

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Labourers on the Rideau Canal, 1826-1832: From Work Site to World Heritage Site
edited by Katherine M.J. McKenna
Borealis Press, Ottawa, 2008
135 pp., illus., $19.95 paperback

To say that building the Rideau Canal was an ambitious undertaking is an understatement. To say that the cost of the project in monetary and particularly human terms was great is a sad fact.

In *Labourers on the Rideau Canal*, editor Katherine M.J. McKenna presents both the statistics and the stories in a portable and picturesque manner.

Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the canal was started by the British military to prevent attack from the United States after the War of 1812. Completed in 1832, it cost £822,000 — £600,000 more than the projected cost. Malaria and other diseases, as well as accidents, violence, and abject poverty, took their toll on the workers, who were a largely Irish and French-Canadian group, but included a small number of English and Scottish.

The book is divided into three chapters: William N.T. Wylie explores the poverty, distress, and disease the workers experienced; McKenna looks at the daily life and dangerous conditions at the Isthmus construction site; and, of particular interest to budding genealogists, Bruce S. Elliott traces Rideau Canal families.

Although the Rideau was never used for its proposed purpose, it nonetheless served as a major route for immigration and cargo transportation, until the St. Lawrence locks were completed in the late 1840s. Today the canal is used for boating, skating, and other seasonal sports. **— B.T.**

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Deborah Morrison

Helping history

When it comes to history education in Canada, there's reason for optimism.

I was recently judging student projects at the Red River Heritage Fair alongside several teachers, including my own social studies teacher from junior high school. I asked if things were improving in the classroom. It sparked an impassioned conversation about problems with an overly complicated curriculum, the absence of funding for resources — and the astonishing lack of historical knowledge among today's incoming history teachers.

Ever since 1997, when Jack Granatstein first pointed an accusatory finger at our education system in Who killed Canadian history?, we've been left to think that Canada is somehow the worst history offender in the world. But we aren't.

In a 2008 survey of Britons under the age of twenty, one in five thought Sir Winston Churchill was a fictional character. It's no wonder — the same survey found that fewer than forty percent had ever picked up a book or sat through a television program about British history.

We're also not the only ones struggling with different views of national history. Australia's "history wars" first emerged in the late 1960s to challenge the "colonial version" of the country's past and the place of aboriginal perspectives within the nation's history. In 2006, then-Prime Minister John Howard mandated a new national history curriculum, principally to restore "pride and honour to the British contributions" in shaping Australia today. The government's recent apology to its indigenous people seems to have helped quench the fiery debate over content, but many obstacles remain in the way ensuring history is any more prevalent in schools.

Even the most dominant culture in the world is having trouble educating its youngest citizens about its past. In 2000, United States Senator Robert Byrd was so dismayed by failed attempts to raise national curriculum standards that he secured fifty million in new annual funding exclusively for the teaching of American history. In just nine years almost a billion dollars has been spent on American's history education. But Sam Wineberg, a leading American history educator and program grant recipient, says it's hard to tell if that funding is making any difference. A core concern is the supposition that teachers can learn their history on the job. He likens that to teaching doctors medicine after they've begun their practice.

While it may be reassuring to know that Canada's historical amnesia is part of a global pandemic, it's also troubling that with the time and energy already invested we still haven't developed a vaccine. On this score, Canadian historians and educators have been taking a proactive interest in getting ahead on these issues. Since 1999, several initiatives have been launched which may change the course of history in our schools.

Student displays at Red River Regional Heritage Fair, Winnipeg.

Peter Seixas, executive director at the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness in Vancouver is analyzing how kids naturally think about history and then developing teaching strategies that "work to get that thinking to be more sophisticated and more powerful." He draws from earlier research models from Britain.

THEN/HiER is a history education network modeled after the Teaching American History program. With only $2.1 million to spend over the next three years, it has already been more successful in bringing historians and classroom teachers together to discuss educational issues than many of their international colleagues.

Canada may be further along in addressing the challenges through research, but we have no efficient means of delivering these strategies to our teachers and classrooms. At least not yet.

To teach more history, we need more history teachers. To teach history better we need better history teachers. To support that goal, we also need more relevant classroom materials and a better means to measure our progress than random public opinion surveys.

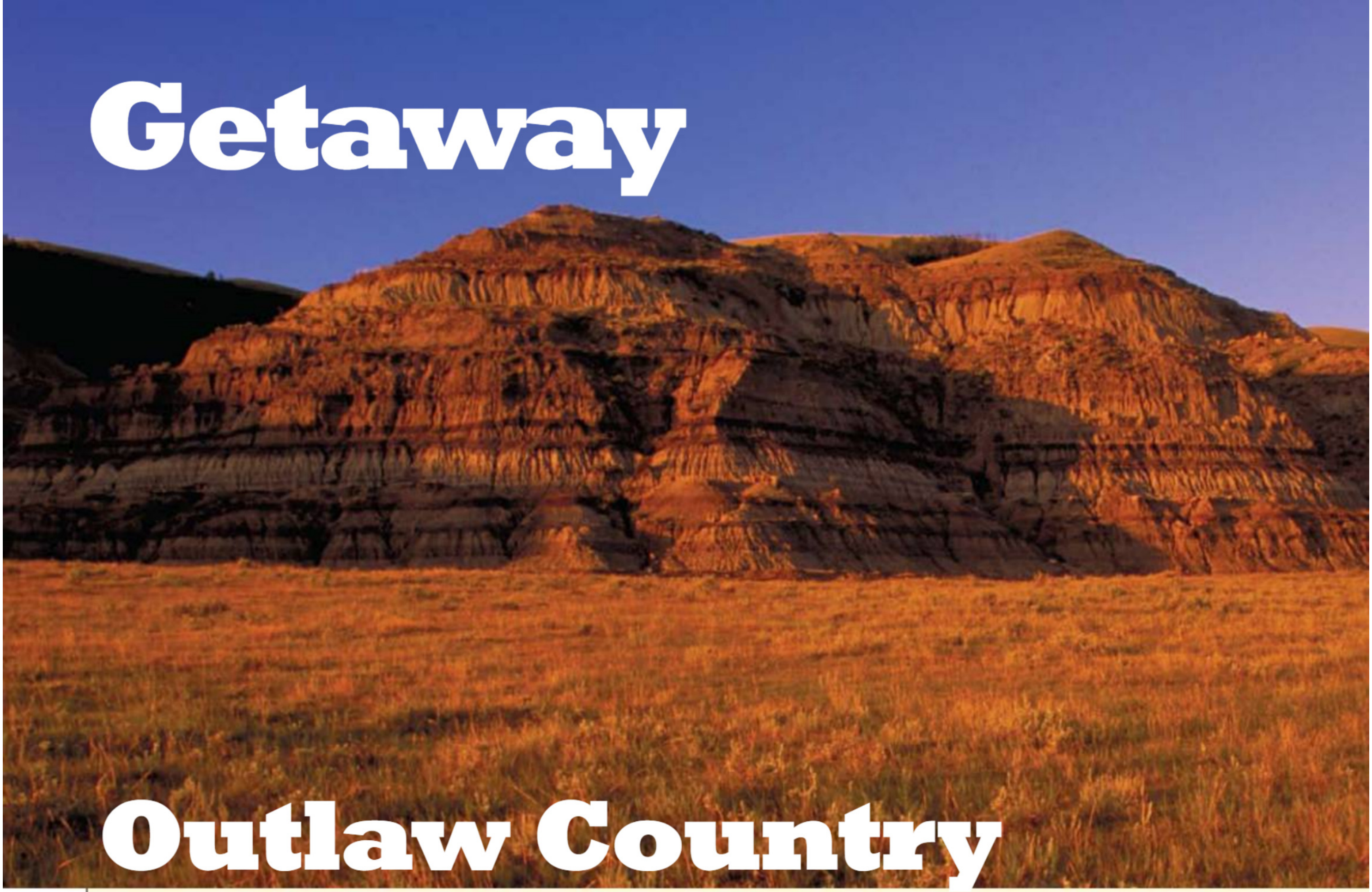
It's the ministries of education that hold the key to implementing changes in curricula, classroom resources, and teacher training — but they have been mostly absent from the discussions.

What might get them to the table? Well, nothing brings the provinces together faster than the possibility of more federal funding. There's even a template to start the conversation. The Council of Ministers of Education in 1999 developed a proposal intended to build such a national framework, but without funding it never moved forward.

Since then a number of history education consortiums have emerged. They've amassed the expertise and have a potential antidote for our ailing history education. They can play a role in bridging the divide of jurisdictional issues, but it's going to take a whole other level of investment to reach into our classrooms.

It's like talks regarding municipal infrastructure. The way forward may seem plodding and unglamorous, but eventually it gets to the point where you simply can't ignore them any longer. The timing is ripe. And this time, Canadians are poised to pave a new course for the rest of the world.

Getaway



Outlaw Country

D. Grant Black explores the murky past of Saskatchewan's Big Muddy Badlands.

As a prairie kid, I absorbed a lot of American western films. Many featured leathery-faced scoundrels who defied frontier justice through resounding gunplay and athletic horseback getaways. Closer to home, I read about real U.S. outlaws who once holed up in the remote Big Muddy Badlands of southern Saskatchewan near the Montana border.

The Big Muddy was perfect outlaw territory at the turn of the twentieth century, when American criminals fleeing U.S. justice had only a short horseback escape across the border to freedom. The glacier-tilled landscape — caves carved from the sandstone by wind and water; winding, treed coulees surrounded by arid, undulating land — was sparsely populated and lightly policed.

Last spring, I stumbled across a guided grassroots tour of the region's outlaw past. This unpretentious roundabout, which originates in Coronach, Saskatchewan, a small coal-mining and power-station community (pop. 940), features rich history, stunning scenery, and an abundance of wildlife in this obscure slice of the Prairies.

So, with my partner Patricia and our border collie Laddie in tow, we ventured two hours south of Regina to investigate.

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Giles Ranch.

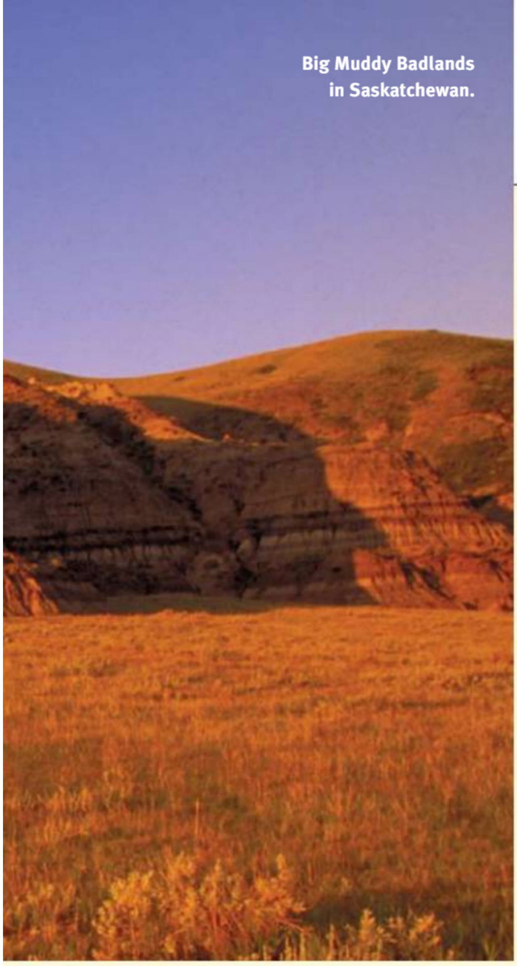
D. GRANT BLACK

Many of the most interesting Big Muddy sites during our six-hour tour were on private ranch land, so we wisely opted for a knowledgeable guide from Coronach Tourism. (A convincing sign on the Giles Ranch gate threatens: "Trespassers will be given a fair trial then hung!")

Our guide, the affable Brent Wagner, left Edmonton in 2003 to return to his hometown. During our 170-kilometre jaunt, Wagner's narrative included lessons in history, geology, ornithology, botany, and anthropology.

"I can usually identify the desert wildflowers along the winding trails or that swooping bird overhead," grins the local. The computer-deskman-turned-amateur-historian loves to share the Big Muddy Badland's engaging history. He recommends a memoir from the late 1800s, *Big Muddy Valley* by Germaine Jolie.

Departing from the Coronach Tourism's rustic building, our first stop is Castle Butte, an ice age relic that looms in the three-kilometre-wide valley like a well-worn saddle. Another non-outlaw



Big Muddy Badlands in Saskatchewan.

FIRSTLIGHT

Burgess Ranch.

D. GRANT BLACK

stop includes the scenic village of Big Beaver, where Aust's General Store, a family-owned enterprise built in the late 1920s, proudly proclaims: "If we don't have it, you don't need it."

Near the Montana border, the plows of industrial agriculture never arrived in the glacier-scraped region. This is cattle country, and the Burgess Ranch, a sprawling eight-thousand-hectare operation, sits nestled in the verdant grasslands.

While we eat our brown bag lunch in the original homestead, now the Old Porch Gallery, painter and historian Tamela Burgess shares stories about infamous outlaws.

Burgess, who published *The Big Muddy Badlands: Past to Present* in 2007, tells us that when lawmen finally moved into Montana's Valley County in the late nineteenth century, American outlaws like Dutch Henry, his brother Coyote Pete, Sam Kelly, the Pigeon Toed Kid, and the notorious Sundance Kid relocated into the Big Muddy.

"Outlaws used the Big Muddy as a base to rob banks and trains and steal horses in Montana. Some expanded their crimes into Canada," says Burgess, who was born and raised six kilometres away on the Montana side.

Burgess spins one yarn that is set before a North West Mounted Police outpost was established nearby. American-born Jasper Huntley, who housed two Mountie lodgers in 1902, greedily took the Crown's rent money while he collaborated with outlaws.

"Unbeknownst to his Mountie boarders, who trusted him, Huntley hung a red blanket on the clothesline to signal to Dutch Henry and his gang that the two constables were riding to the east side of the valley that day; he tipped over a rain barrel to signify a ride to the west side," says Burgess.

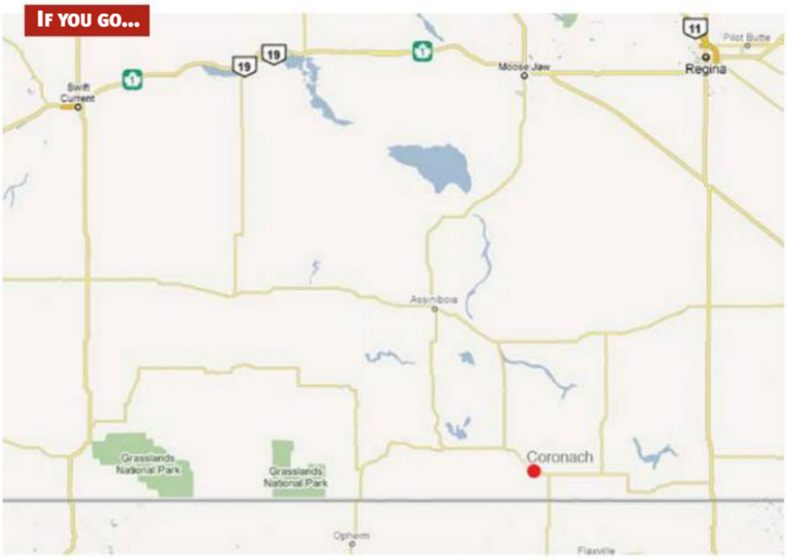
After lunch, we enter the Giles Ranch to explore the Sam Kelly Outlaw Caves. Wagner tells us these wily outlaws used the sandstone caves, carved farther into the hills from smaller existing caves, to hide from lawmen.

One smaller, lower cave was used to shelter several men, while a larger cave up the hill once hid up to six stolen horses in a shaft almost ten metres deep. The names and dates of outlaws waiting for posses to pass are etched into the hard sandstone.

During our ride back to Coronach, images of past desperadoes are still fresh in our heads. Patricia and I agree not to stray from the law.

D. Grant Black is a freelance writer and editor whose paternal great-grandparents arrived in Saskatchewan in 1884. He's almost sure none of his Western Canadian ancestors were outlaws.

IF YOU GO...



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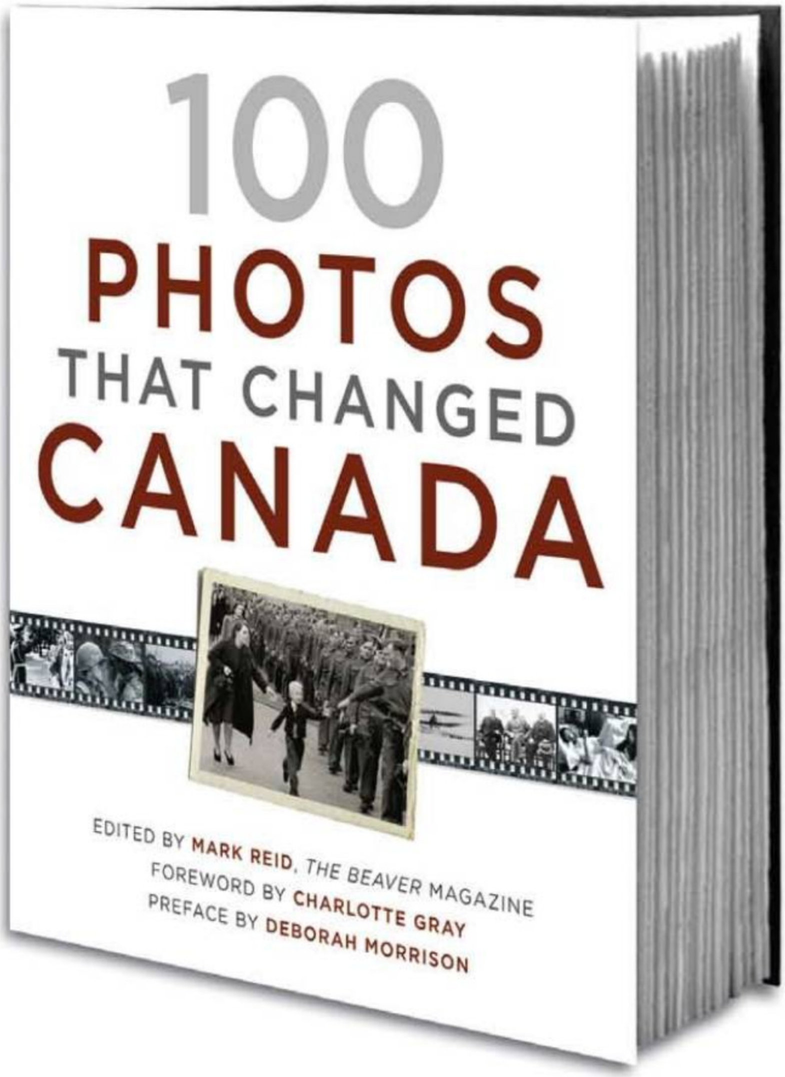
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CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

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The Beaver was founded in 1920 by the Hudson's Bay
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Powerful prose

Talented writers win aboriginal writing challenge.

The 2009 Our Story: Aboriginal Writing Challenge winners have been chosen.

First place in the fourteen-to-eighteen-year-old category is Trevor Jang, sixteen, of Telkwa, British Columbia, and a member of the Moricetown First Nation. Trevor is the author of "The Hiatsk," which tells the story of a special friendship forged between a chief and a troubled young boy at a basketball court.

The winner of the nineteen-to-twenty-nine-year-old category is Howard Adler, twenty-eight, of Ottawa, a member of the Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation. Howard submitted a video script, entitled "Johnny Seven Fires." The tale, told in Ojibwa and English, follows a struggling Anishinaabe man, named Johnny, who rediscovers his identity, his culture, and himself, through language.

The winning stories were selected by an advisory committee, which included Patrick Brazeau, Tantoo Cardinal, Thompson Highway, Brian Maracle, Lee Maracle, Mark Reid, Drew Hayden Taylor, Barbara Van Haute, and honourary jury member Joseph Boyden.

The contest, which is meant to showcase the talent and creativity of Canada's aboriginal youth, is organized by the Dominion Institute and is sponsored by Enbridge Inc., TD Bank Financial Group, De Beers Canada Inc., Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, and *The Beaver: Canada's History Magazine*. Media partners are the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) and *Legacy* magazine.

The winners received their awards at a special ceremony at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary in July.

The Hiatsk

by Trevor Jang

It's late on a long December day. Nisga'a Chief Joseph Gosnell sits in his fishing spot along the Nass Valley. He imagines fishing on a warm summer day, the glistening rays of heat contradicting the cool liquid waves ravishing his body and mind. However, the temperature is below freezing and chills of wind are running through the stiff air, bringing him back to the present.

Chief Gosnell ponders his latest battles for recognition. It's been a month since he led his people through the doors of the B.C. legislature, hoping it would be the final cry for a treaty. Unfortunately it is not official yet. The Nisga'a people are so close to being recognized as a distinct government, so close to having their name put on the map. But not yet.

He sighs, gets up, and starts to return home in the dark, completely at ease. Out of nowhere, a small animal runs across the path. It means no harm, but Joseph is startled and trips, falling headfirst into a deep crevasse. He yells for help, though he knows he's too far for anyone above to hear. He struggles uselessly, feeling the freezing snow around his body. He closes his eyes, and awaits death.

"Grab my hand."

He reaches out and grabs the stranger's hand. They both stumble onto the path. Chief Gosnell stands up to thank his savior. It's a young man from town, maybe sixteen years old.

The boy runs off before Joseph has a chance to give thanks.

Days later, the chief visits the high school to ask after the boy who saved him.

"What did he look like?" asks the principal.

Chief Gosnell describes him — dark skin, small eyes, ratty hair, wearing a red winter coat that's far too small for his large frame.

"If I'm correct in the boy you're referring to, you must be mistaken."

"I'm certain. I could never forget his face. Why are you so startled?"

"Well, it's just that the boy that you are referring to is no saviour. He steals, he … he's just given up."

"Yet he saved me."

"Well, he does two things: causes problems and shoots hoops in his front yard."

"What's his name?"

"Jon."

Chief Joseph recalls seeing this young man shoot hoops hour after hour in his front yard. He always looked hard, unapproachable.

Chief pulls up to a small house. The paint's peeling, bits of garbage clutter the yard, and Jon is shooting hoops.

He watches Jon take shot after shot.

"You would be a lot more accurate if you kept your elbow in."

Jon turns to him, slightly startled.

"What do you want?"

"I've come to repay you."

"You can repay me by leaving me alone."

"Look, you deserve a reward. And I think I can offer something that you might like. I'd like you to join my basketball team."

Jon's ears perk up like a puppy. It looks like he wants to answer, but hesitates for a moment.

"Don't worry, I'll pay your expenses. Consider it a thank-you gift."

Jon still looks uncertain. "But what team? Where? What is this for?"

"It is our Nisga'a team. You would be representing us. We will be going to the All-Native Basketball tournament in Prince Rupert, in a couple of months."

Jon looks torn, but agrees.

"There are a couple of conditions, however. Since you are starting a lot later than the rest of the team, you need to have private practices with me two days a week, along with the three regular ones. Also, all children under eighteen must be in school full-time. You can do this?"

Jon nods.

Regular practices are easy for Jon; he just puts his head down and works. Private practices are another matter. Physically, emotionally, and spiritually, Jon is pushed to his limits. Chief Gosnell knows some of the things Jon has done, but these things are past, and they need to write a future. He tells Jon of their nation's fight for recognition and an independent government. And he seems to listen. Things are going well, until one practice.

"You're very physically fit," Chief starts off. "But that is not all there is. There has to be balance. You must be strong-spirited, emotionally stable, and mentally alert. The blame for the past is not all yours, some of it is the responsibility of your parents. But…."

Jon abruptly stops his workout. "Don't talk about my parents, old man," he says coldly.

Chief Gosnell's shock turns too offence. "I'm sorry if I offended you Jon, but you don't speak to me like that. Ever."

"Just shut your hole. NO ONE talks about my family."

The ceiling fan swishes above them in the silence. Jon turns for the door.

"Where are you going?"

"Home."

Jon slams the heavy door behind him.

A week later, Jon comes home from school. He hasn't gone to practice since his outburst, but on this particularly rough day he misses it. His mother is sprawled out on the couch with a drink in her hand. His father is still at the mill. He's just going to come home and join his mother with a bottle, anyways. His younger brother and sister are arguing in the other room; he thinks it's the source of his mom's desire to drink.

Dark arrives with Jon's dad. The smell of liquor is draped on his dirty uniform. Jon presses his ear up against his door. He can faintly hear his younger siblings and parents. Something smashes, somebody screams. Jon can't take it anymore. He opens his door to see his younger brother and sister scurrying into their room. Jon puts on his small coat and heads for the door.

"Where are you going, boy?" His father scowls at him.

"Out."

"You aren't going to that stupid ball again are you? You are wasting your time. You need to find a job and start contributing to our nation."

"Like you?" Jon challenges as he slams the door behind him.

Chief Gosnell wanders down the familiar path. He hasn't been back since he fell. The ice has begun to melt, and winter is slowly pulling away. He looks down upon the brilliant scene, to a figure in the distance. As it gets closer he realizes it's Jon.

"It's been awhile," Chief starts off, not exactly sure what to say. Jon stares. Chief Gosnell thinks for a moment. "You can do some great things for us — not just our basketball team, but also our nation's team, our home. We need you as much as you need us — for our reputation and future."

Jon stands up. "What reputation? There's nothing I can do to stop people from thinking the way they think about me. And what future? I'm just going to grow up, go work at the mill, and come home and yell at my family. There's nothing else, nothing else that'll ever come."

"Do you know what your name is?"

"My … yeah of course. Name?"

"Your Nisga'a name."

"Oh, yeah. It's Hiatsk.

"And do you know what that means? The Hiatsk is a symbol of wealth, power, and prestige. It will be our nation's symbol when we win our fight, when we gain our recognition and independence. We need you. You're our Hiatsk. You're your parents Hiatsk."

"I'm nothing to my family."

"You're everything. You are the wealth and power that they don't have. You are their most prestigious gift. They love you, they just don't know how to show it."

Jon just sits there, absorbing the man's words.

"Do you know how many times I have wanted to give up on our treaty negotiations? It's about persistence through adversity. Our basketball team was put together for a reason. We'll put our nation on the map. The young men on the team are representing what we've been fighting for all along — the unity of our people, the independence of our nation." Chief Gosnell takes a few deep breaths through an agonizing moment of silence, then turns back to the trail and leaves.

Jon thinks in silence for the longest time. The wind rushes in the darkening sky. Chief's words swirl through his head, mixing and matching and forming one big epiphany.

"I am Hiatsk," he whispers quietly. His mind begins to settle down. He realizes now. The team is the Hiatsk. The team is the Nisga'a. The team will show the world how rich and proud the Nisga'a people are. It is up to them. The Hiatsk.

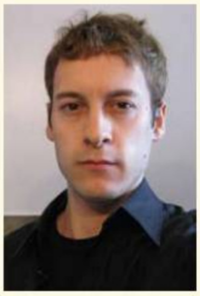
Hundreds of people are packed into the gym. The Nisga'a take part in the opening ceremonies. Jon looks into the crowd. They are part of a historical event. They are representing their people.

"You did the right thing."

Jon looks up into the chief's eyes. He just nods in agreement. He's where he needs to be.

Johnny Seven Fires

by Howard Adler



Editor's note: This story has been excerpted due to length. To read the full screeplay, go to www.our-story.ca

Scene One: Johnny

[Johnny is an Anishinaabe youth and he wears his hair styled in a mohawk, which is dyed blood-red (not spiked). Johnny is in a bathroom and the camera angle shows both the back of his head and his face reflected in the cabinet mirror. He's hunched over the sink and is visibly distraught. The sound of water can be heard from the bathtub. Johnny adds bubbles to the filling tub and then turns off the water. There is a CD player next to the tub and he puts on a CD. Music plays. Johnny gets undressed and slips into the tub, relaxes, closes his eyes, and leans his head back. Moments pass. He lights a cigarette, smokes some, and then lets the half-smoked cigarette fall into his bathwater. Johnny has an old-fashioned straight razor. He examines it from different angles, feels its weight, and then tests its edge on his finger, drawing blood. Moments pass. He calmly begins to cut his wrist lengthwise, but then he sucks in air through his teeth in pain and flinches, which accidentally knocks the CD player into the water. The music stops, everything goes black, and the sound of electricity crackling is heard. End scene.]

Scene Two: The Dream

[It is night. There is a camera shot of flowing water. It's a churning river, and in the darkness you can see the whiteness from where it flows over rocks. Then there is a loud noise, like screaming or a hurricane, followed by silence and darkness. This scene is at night and it is very quiet. Johnny opens his eyes. He's naked and alone, and laying on a dimly lit rock. He stands up and looks lost and confused. The rock is covered with petroglyphs, and he reaches to touch one but then pulls back. He looks at his surroundings and the camera sees too, sees the glass and steel and the concrete path built around the rock that he stands on. Then he is walking barefoot on the concrete path. A rabbit appears. Johnny sees the rabbit, reaches towards it, and it bites his hand. He jerks his arm back and looks at his bloody finger. A loud thumping sound is heard; there is a half-beat between each thump. End scene.]

Scene Three: Waking

[Johnny's mohawk is spiked-up for this scene. This scene begins with a camera shot of a sunrise. It's beautiful. The thumping sound is still heard with a half-beat between each thump. Then there is a shot of a fist pounding on a door. Then a shot of Johnny's eyes opening. He sits up quickly while choking and gasping as a women's voice can be heard yelling....]

Sarah: "JOHNNEEEY, what the heck are you doing in there?"

[Shot of Johnny coughing and spluttering and breathing deeply]

Sarah: [Shot of door and more loud knocking.]

"You've been in there for like hours and I've gotta use the washroom."

[Johnny doesn't answer; he just sits in the tub breathing.]

"If you don't come out like right now, then I'm gonna come in!"

[Pause. And then angrily:] "Are you listening? What the hell are you doing in there?"

[Johnny gets his bearings this time and becomes aware of his surroundings; he clumsily replies, unknowingly, in Ojibwa.]

Johnny: *"Ah....gawiin gego....Nga-gii-zhiitaa go wiiba"*

("Ah....nothing....I'll be finished soon.")

Sarah: "Stop messing around Johnny. I've really got to go."

Johnny: *"Naahaaw....Gaawiin njida....Nga-gii-zhiitaa go wiiba....Daga-moozhginang ndahiiman."*

("Okay....I'm sorry....I'll be right out....Just let me get my stuff together.")

[As he talks Johnny wraps a towel around himself, closes his razor, and gathers his clothing in his arms. Then he opens the door and lets Sarah enter.]

Sarah: [Brushes impatiently past Johnny into the bathroom saying:] "Why the hell are you talking like that? You're not funny you know. Stop pretending like you know how to speak. Ah! My god, what is that smell? It smells like bacon in here. And why the hell is the CD player floating in the tub? That's really stupid! You could electrocute yourself you know."

Johnny: *"Gaawiin niinaa ngii-kendziin! Gii-bkobiise niina nbiing!"*

("I don't know, I guess maybe it fell in the water.")

Sarah: "Aargh, stop talking like that. You don't seriously think that it's funny, do you? Ah, you know what, just get the hell out!"

[Sarah pushes Johnny out of the bathroom and slams the door shut. End scene.]

Scene Four: The Store

[This scene begins with a shot of a sunset. Music is playing. There is a shot of a convenience store sign. Johnny is outside the store. He looks cool and is wearing a black leather jacket, blue jeans, and sunglasses. He enters the store and the music fades as he walks up to the counter.]

Clerk: "Hey there, what could I do for ya?"

Johnny: *"Boozhoo! Ah....Aaniind na go nda-giishpinonaa semaa? Togwash go miinshin niizhoo-gchi-mkakoons miinwaa dash shkodens."*

("Hello! Ah....Could I buy some cigarettes? Give me two king-size packs and a lighter please.")

Clerk: "Uh ... what?"

Johnny: *"Oh. Ah ... miinshin eta niizhoo-gchi-mkakoons miinwa shkodens."*

("Oh. Ah ... just give me two packs of king-size smokes and a lighter.")

Clerk: [Speaking slowly and emphatically, making hand gestures.] "Oh! You don't speak English eh? Ah. Just ... point ... at ... what ... you ... want....

Johnny: [Speaking loudly] *"G-npaaj-dibenh na? Miinshin mkak-semaa!"*

("What's your problem? Just give me a pack of cigarettes!.")

Clerk: "Wow! Calm down. Now, what is it ... that you want?"

Johnny: [Speaks slowly, mocking the stupid way the clerk speaks, and at the same time happens to point at the cigarettes behind the counter.] *"Saaaaay ... maaaaa, Nwii-yaawaa ... semaa"*

("Ciiiig ... arrr ... ettes ... I ... would ... like ... ciiig ... arrr ... ettes.")

Clerk: [Clerk asks with hand gestures in a Jack Black sort of way] "Oh. You want cigarettes! Which ... kind ... would ... you ... like...?

[Sighing loudly, Johnny points at a brand, takes a lighter off a display, pays for the items, and leaves. End scene.]

Scene Five: The Bar

[Johnny walks into a bar. He no longer wears sunglasses. Music is playing in the background. A server sees him, smiles, and comes in his direction]

Server: "Hi there. What could I do for you?"

Johnny: *"Oh. Boozhoo, Nda-ndawendaan biitewaagmiseg!"*

("Oh. Hi, I need a beer!")

Server: "Ah. Oookaay! I have no idea what you just said! Umm ....Do you speak any English?"

Johnny: [Angrily] *Ndi-zhaagnaashiim! Miinshin biitewaagmiseg! Kino gwaya bmaadizjig gii giiwnaajidibewag? Ogwash go ... wiindimooshin! G-nsostam na ekidiyaanh?*

("I am speaking English! Just give me a beer! Has the whole world gone crazy? Please ... tell me that you understand what I'm saying?")

Server: [Speaking slowly with hand gestures.] Wow, calm down. Now ... what ... can ... I ... get ... for ... you?

Johnny: *"OHHH... Gaawiin miinwa! Ntam nwiijkiiwenh ngii-wiindimaag giiwnaadaangidoonyaanh, mish miinwaa aw daawe-niniiyish, miinwaa aw ziignige-niniiyish! Aanish go na ezhiwebak noongoom?"*

("OHHH... Not again! First it was my friend telling me I was talking funny, and then it was that stupid guy at the store, and now the stupid bartender! What the hell is going on?")

Server: [Server speaks slowly with hand gestures and indicates towards the refrigerator behind her with its glass front through which an assortment of alcoholic beverages can be seen.] "Oh, I have an idea... what... is it... that... you... want? Just... point... at it, okay?"

Johnny: [Sighs.] *"Bezhigwaatig naan-midina."*

("One bottle of Fifty.")

[As he points, the camera sees a bottle of Labatt's 50 in the fridge. We also see the brand of beer next to it. He puts a bill on the counter, and then slumps on the bar in exasperation with his head on his folded arms. After his beer arrives, he remains slumped on the bar. Several beats pass before he sits up and looks at his beer and notices that it's not the right brand that he pointed at. He sighs, mumbles a complaint, and then takes a long swig.]

Johnny: *"Ziignige-niniiyish gii-npaaj-biidood biitewaagmiseg!"*

("The stupid bartender brought the wrong beer!") [End scene]

Scene Six: The Dog

[This scene takes place at Millennium Park in downtown Peterborough, Ontario. It is nighttime. There is a shot of the sign that reads: "Nogojiwanoong, The Place at the End of the Rapids". There is a sweeping shot of the park that runs along the Otonabee River, and a shot of the metal wolf sculpture with the looming M&R building in the background. There is a shot of Johnny sitting on a slab of concrete, and the railway bridge stretching over the river is seen directly behind him. Johnny looks thoughtful as he smokes a cigarette. After a minute he speaks, angrily throwing his cigarette away and cradling his head in his hands.]

Johnny: *"Wegensh na ezhiwebak noongoom!?!"*

("What is going on today!?!")

[Several beats pass. A dog appears wagging its tail and looking for attention.]

Johnny: *"Nimoosh? Wii-yaawaa na nimshish? Maajaan, maajaan, nmadabin!*

("A dog? What do you want you stupid dog? Come here, come here, and sit down!")

[The dog listens and sits down next to Johnny who pets the dog absently.]

Johnny: *"Naahaaw, nmaajaan nimshish."*

("Okay, go away you stupid dog.")

[The dog listens and starts to leave. Beat.]

"Hey bekaa! G-nisotoo na go? Bskaabiin!"

("Hey wait a minute! You can understand me? Come back here!")

[The dog returns when Johnny calls it back. Happy that the dog understands him, he gives it a big hug. Afterwards, the dog runs away and Johnny gives chase. He follows it across the railway bridge over the river. The dog stops near a bench in a small park overlooking the river from the opposite side. The colour of this scene should look like Gericault's painting *The Raft of the Medusa*.]

Scene Seven: Jenny

[Out of breath, Johnny takes a slumped position on the park bench while absently petting the dog. He begins to speak, oblivious as an elderly Nishinaabe woman, who is futuristically dressed, like in the film *The Matrix*, appears on the bench beside to him.]

Johnny: *Naamdamwinish iw ... waaboozoonyish aw ... miinwa bemaadizijig gaawiin nisotaagosiig gego kidiyaanh Ngii-kid ... kino na kiing eyaajig nda-giimoji-nzhiigenmigok! Nimoosh eta niijkiwenh!”*

(“That stupid dream ... with that stupid rabbit ... and stupid people who can’t understand anything that I say ... the whole world is against me! Only the dog is my friend!”)

Jenny: *“Kaa, Gaawiin dibwewin aasinoo, Ge-giibaajizhiyaa, Gaawiin aasinoo! Kino go kiing eyaajig yaawag eyaayin ... mii sa go enendaagok!”*

(“That isn’t true, you’re being foolish, and it’s quite the opposite! The entire world is on your side ... it just seems that way.”)

Johnny: *“Kaa, G-debwe go! Pii Giigdoyaanh, bemaadizijig gaawiin na-nsotaagsiig....Hey! Bekaa. G-nisotoo na go?”*

(“No, it’s true! When I talk, people don’t understand me and.... Hey! Wait a minute. [Surprised, Johnny looks up from his slumped position.] Can you understand me?”)

Jenny: *“Mii go geget, Giin sa go naa ggiibaadiz. Aaniish go na ezhignoonaa giish pin Nsostooyimba? Wiindimooshin shkiniigish, aaniish go naa ga zhi-ntaa nishinaabemoyan? Aabiji go naagod ensa ngodemowin ji Nishinaabemowaapa! Aabiji ngchi-nendam noondoonaa giigdooyin!”*

(“Of course I can, you’re being foolish. How could we be talking if I couldn’t understand you? Tell me young man, how did you learn to speak so well? It isn’t very common for one from your generation to be a speaker! Though I am happy to hear you speak!)

Johnny: *“Wegnesh go na debaataamon mdimooyenyish? Kino gwaya gii-kendaan waa-zhi-niishinaabemod.”*

(“What are you talking about you crazy old woman? Everyone knows how to speak.”)

Jenny: *“Enh, gaawiin kina gwaya ntaa nishinaabemosii”!*

(“Yes, but not everyone can speak in Ojibwe!”)

[Johnny goes silent, looking at Jenny in confusion.]

Jenny: *“Shkiniigish, aabiish enji baayin? Miinwa aabiish gaa-nji-kendimon waa-zhi-nishinaabemoyin?”*

(“So young man, where are you from? And where did you learn to speak Ojibwe so well?)

Johnny: [A pause, and then, absently:] *“Kaa go ngoji.”* (“Nowhere.”)

Jenny: *“Aambe shkiniigish, kina go ngoji bemaadizid binjibaa.”* (“Come now young man, everyone is from somewhere”)

Johnny: *“Kaa ... Ndi--kid ... gaawiin wii-kaa ngii-Ojibwemosii....Mii na noongoom eniweyaanh? Mii na noongoom ezhinaangidoonan? Mii na gwaya enji nsostoosig iw?”*

[Thoughtfully] (“No... I mean... I never learned to speak Ojibwe....) [Excitedly] (Is that what I’m speaking right now? Is that what you’re speaking? Is that why no one can understand me?)

Jenny: *"Mii go geget, gda-Ojibwem! Gwesin na gdib? Gii-wnaaj-dibenaadig?"*

(“Of course, you are speaking Ojibwe! Are you right in the head? Are you crazy?”)

Johnny: *“Gaa naa ngii-kendiziin, Gnimaa-niinaa-giiwnaa-jndibenaadig!*

(“I don’t know, maybe I am crazy!)

Jenny: [Pause.] *“Aniish ezhinikaazyin?”*

(“What’s your name?”)

Johnny: *“Niizhwaaswi-mshkode ndi-zhinikaaz, kiin dash?”*

(“My name is Seven Fires, and you?”)

Jenny: *“Hmm ... Aapji-mshkawzimigad iw zhnikaazwin, Gda-gchi-nendaan iw zhnikaazwin!”*

[Looking very serious.] (“Hmm ... That’s a very powerful name, you should be proud of that name!”)

Johnny: *“Aaniish edimon? Nda-aan memoonji zhinikaade nooswin! Gaawiin gchi-mshkawziimgaasinoo.”*

(“What do you mean? I’ve got the most common name there is! It’s not powerful.”)

Jenny: *“Gaawiin na gdi-nenziin iw gchi-piitendaagok zhinkaagoyin ezhi-waanjigewin iw sa aawaang gchi-mshkoziimgak iw sa niizhwaaswi-mshkode nikaazwin?”*

[Looking cross.] (“You don’t think that it’s important to be named after ‘The Prophecy of Seven Fires?’”)

Johnny: *“Gaawiin ndi-zhinikaazsii iw ... Jcha ... aaauu ... neeee, niinaa ndi-zhinikaaz, ndi-nendam!”*

(“But that’s not my name. My name is ... Jcha ... aaauu ... neeee, at least, I think it was anyway! Well, what’s your name?”)

Jenny: *“Aanzhenii Ndizhinikaaz.”*

(“My name is Jenny/Angel”)

Johnny: *“Ngchi-nendam-nkweshkonaa Aanzhenii, debwewin, ngchi-nendam gnoonaa. Ngii-de-gwiinindam go, eko gzhebaagak go, gaawiin go gwaya ngii-nsostaagsii gego kidiyaanh. Geget na go nda-Ojibwemowem?”*

(“Well, it’s nice to meet you Jenny, or more truthfully, it’s a relief to talk to you. I was starting to get worried. Since this morning, everyone I tried to talk to couldn’t understand a word I said! Am I really speaking Ojibwa?)

Jenny: *“Enh, mii go geget! [Pause] Gnabaaj sa go naa gdebwenaadig? Gii-gshkoz na gzheb Ojibwemoyaan?”*

(“Yes, of course!) [Pause.] (But, is it true? Did you wake up this morning just speaking Ojibwa?”)

Johnny: *“Enh, Ngii-nendam go.”*

(“Yes, I think so”)

Jenny: *“Miinwa go noongoom, gda-zhaaganaashiim na?”*

(“And now, can you speak English?”)

Johnny: “Gaawiin dash nda-nendisii!” (“I don’t think so!”)

Jenny: *“Debwetaan! Giish pin zhaagnaashiimoyaan kidoyaanh dash ‘you have a silly haircut, you smell funny, and your left ear is lower then the other one?’”*

(“Prove it! What if I said in English that: ‘You have a silly haircut, you smell funny, and your left ear is lower then the other one?’”)

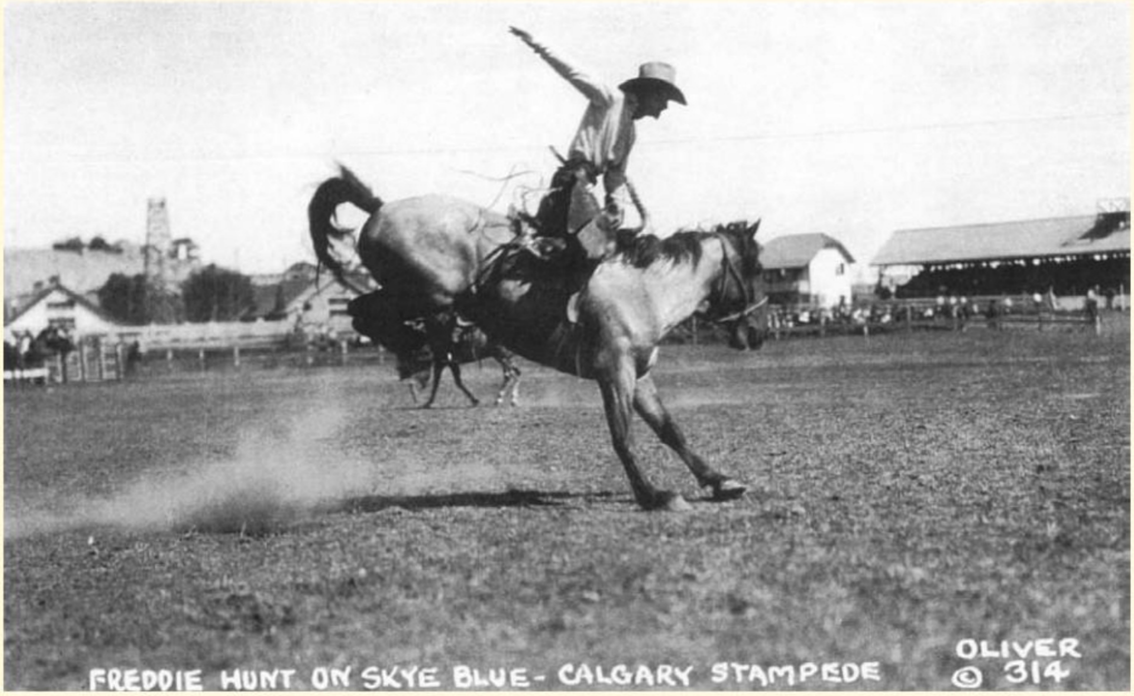
Johnny: *“Baaahh ... gaawiin nokiimgaasinoon ne’en. Nsostaawag go giw annind Zhaaganaashiimowaad... gaa dash, niin da-nendam iw... gaawiin sa nda-nwesii!”*

(“Baaahh ... it doesn’t work like that. I can understand when other people speak English. But, I think that I just can’t speak it!”)

[For the rest of this story, go to www.our-story.ca]

Album

Neil Hill is a great-nephew of Margaret and Fred Hunt. He lives in Peterborough, Ontario.


FREDDIE HUNT ON SKYE BLUE - CALGARY STAMPEDE
OLIVER
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See you at the stampede

The Calgary Stampede has been a regular occurrence at Calgary's Stampede Park since 1912. Billed as "The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth," it was founded by American trick roper Guy Weadick. Weadick envisioned a "Wild West Extravaganza," and with twenty thousand dollars in prize money and over one hundred thousand spectators the first year, it was a huge success.

The internationally recognized rodeo has been popular since its inception. Here we see Fred Hunt riding a bronco named Skye Blue at the stampede, probably sometime during the 1930s.

Fred's life saw a great variety of careers besides rodeo riding. Born in the County of Middlesex, near London, England, he was conscripted into the County of London Yeomanry, a British cavalry regiment. He served under General Allenby on the Egyptian-Gaza front and fought at the Battles of Gaza and Megiddo, marching into Jerusalem in December 1917.

After emigrating to Canada in the 1920s, he worked across Western Canada before ending up near Binscarth, Manitoba, and marrying Margaret Mactier. Fred and his wife moved to Winnipeg, where Fred worked as a court stenographer. Neil says on Sundays he would practise his short hand by transcribing radio sermons. He died in 1978.

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o *The Beaver*, P.O. Box 56060, Portage Place RPO, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0G9. Or email your submission to album@thebeaver.ca. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your posted submission returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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